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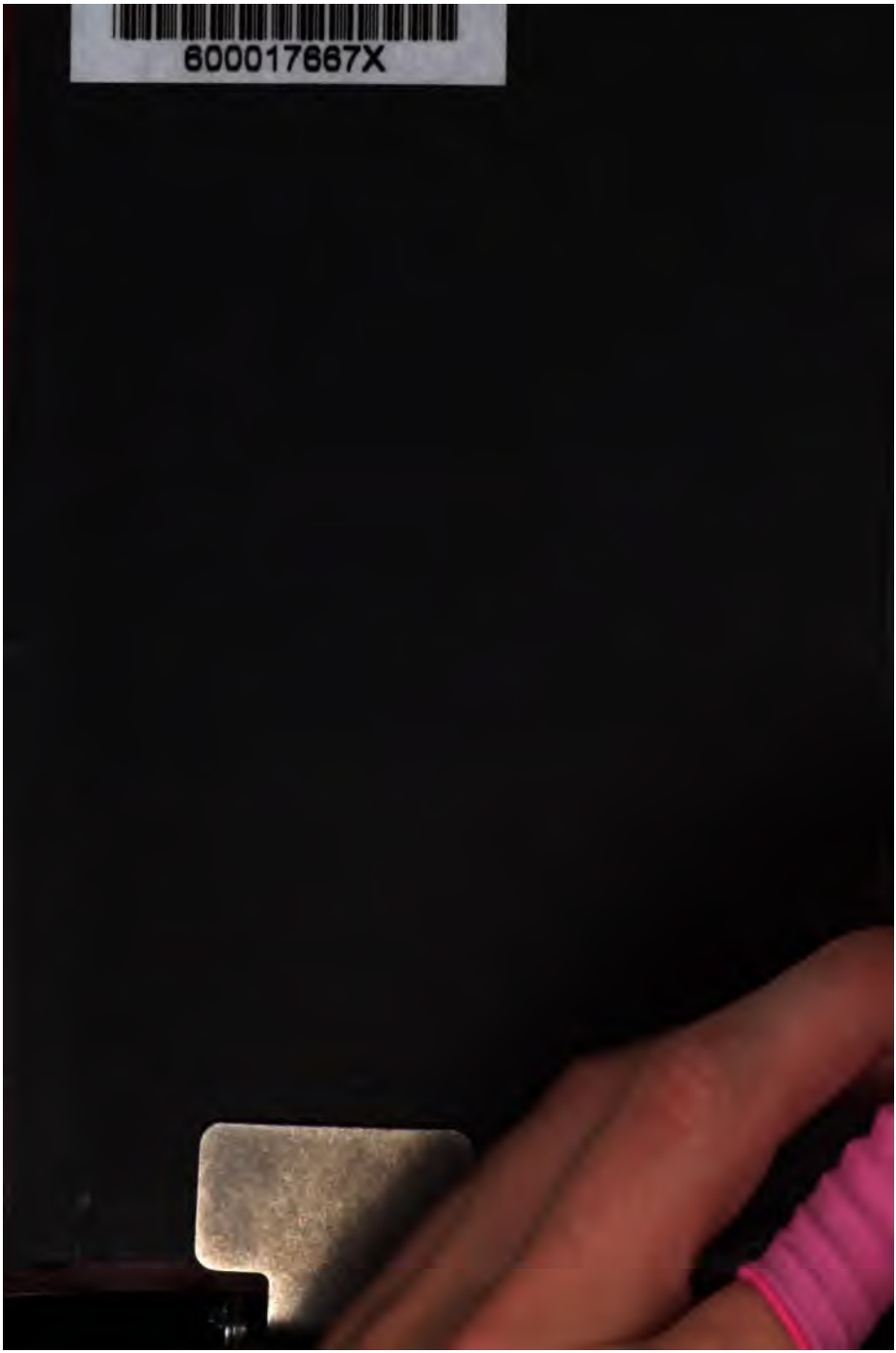

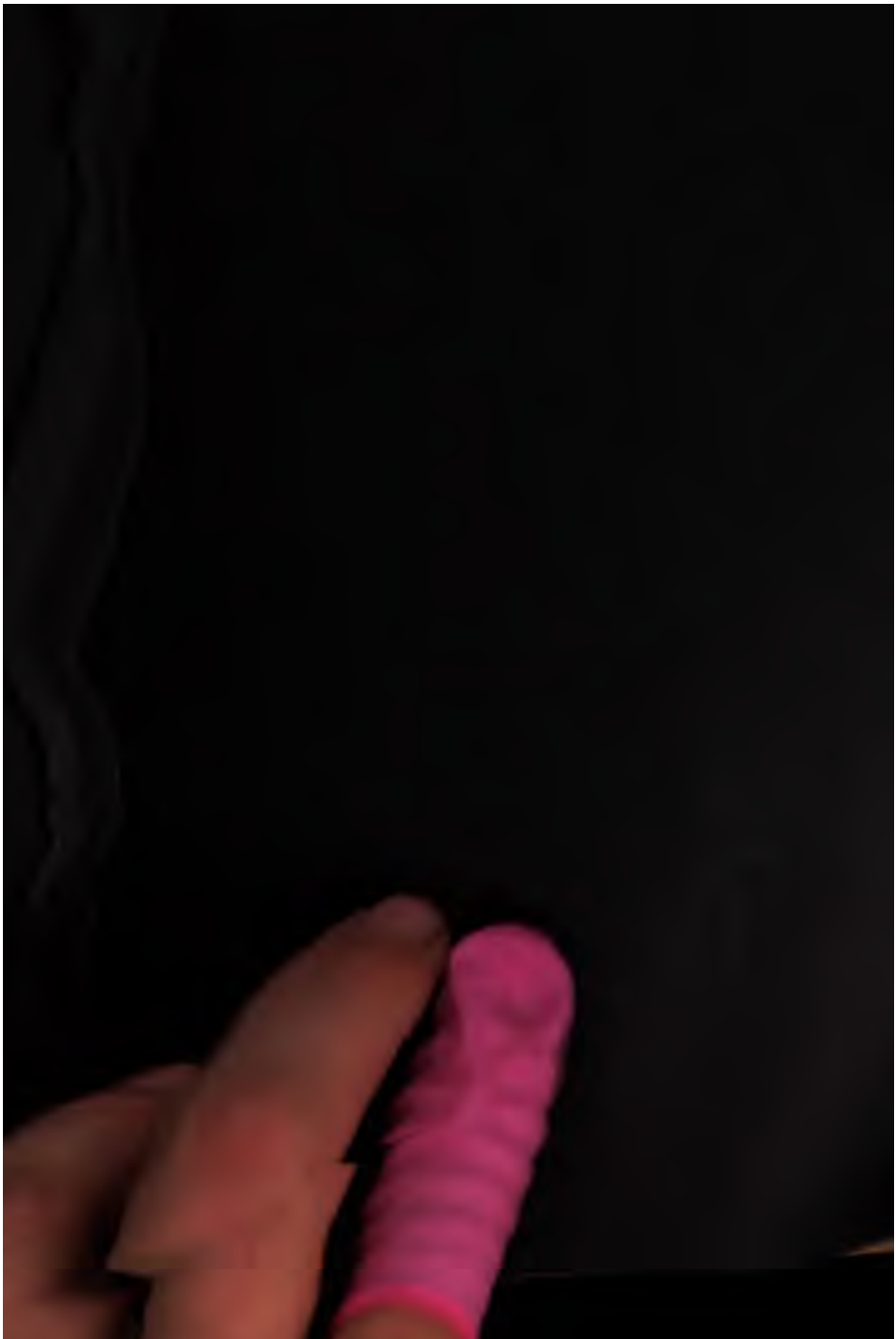

MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS, M.A.

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REV. W^M C. BURNS, M.A.

BY THE

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. WM. C. BURNS, M.A.,

MISSIONARY TO CHINA

FROM THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

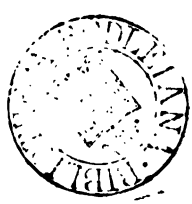
BY THE

REV. ISLAY BURNS, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY,
FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

"Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions (or hardships), do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."—2 Tim. iv. 5.

THIRD EDITION.



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PREFACE.

THE difficulty I anticipated in writing the Biography of one so nearly related to me was very soon forgotten as I proceeded with my task, and felt more and more deeply how utterly insignificant are all such earthly ties, in presence of the higher relations of that eternal kingdom in which my lamented Brother so entirely lived. If, while he was still with us, it was possible for those most closely connected with him in some measure to know him "after the flesh," one instantly felt so soon as he had passed within the veil that henceforth we could know him so no more.

The materials from which the narrative has been drawn are—1st, My own personal recollections and those of other intimate friends; 2d, Private letters addressed chiefly to members of his own family; and 3d, Copious journals, extending over the whole period of his home ministry, and continued, though in a briefer and more fragmentary manner, during the early years of his residence in China. From these last I have quoted very largely, but not more so I believe than those who are really interested in his work would wish me to have done. Indeed, the difficulty often was merely to *extract* from a docu-

ment, which many readers doubtless would have wished to possess entire.

To the many friends to whom I have been indebted for valuable materials, I have made acknowledgment in the course of the work at the places where their communications have been used; but I would here specially mention the names of the late Rev. Dr. Burns, of Toronto, who contributed the tenth chapter; the Rev. Duncan M'Gregor, M.A., of Dundee, and the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick, of Dublin, who furnished the graphic sketches of my Brother's labours in Edinburgh and Dublin; and the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, M.A., of Amoy, to whose loving and painstaking endeavours I am indebted for almost all the precious memorials from China which enrich the closing chapters.

My single aim has been to present a true and life-like picture of him whose footsteps I had undertaken to trace; and that thus being dead he may yet speak, just as he spoke while he was with us, to the praise of that divine grace which he so greatly magnified, and by which alone, as he so profoundly felt, he was what he was.

FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW,
December 6th, 1869.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS, M.A.

CHAPTER I.

1815—1832.

EARLY YEARS.

WILLIAM CHALMERS BURNS, the subject of the present memoir, was the third son of the Rev. William Hamilton Burns, D.D., minister successively of Dun in Angus, and of Kilsyth in Stirlingshire, and was born in the manse of the former parish on the 1st day of April, 1815. It was a quiet and gentle spot, full of stillness and peace, nestling, with the adjoining church and graveyard, close within the bosom of a romantic dell, amid the shadows of ancient trees and the hoarse chorus of rooks high overhead, which seemed rather to increase than to break the silence. A little beyond, reached by a rustic bridge across an arm of the ravine, was the gray mansion-house of the Erskines, with its antique garden and bowling-green and smooth-shaven lawn, carrying back the thoughts into the far past, as associated in popular tradition with stories of "the good Superintendent" and the brave John Knox.

With this tranquil scene, little suggestive of profound spiritual experiences or intense moral struggles, were his earliest memories linked. To the neighbouring cathedral city of Brechin, too, of which a paternal uncle was then minister, and which by the continual coming and going of cousins and common friends had become to us as another home, our thoughts in after-days often recurred —with the fine old church and churchyard, and the castle steep and the castle pool, and the quaint streets, and the fair sunny gardens, and the scarlet-vested town's officers, the objects to us of continual wonderment; and chief of all, the reverend face and form of the good pastor, whose very look was a benediction,—all bright for ever in the golden light of childhood. In his sixth year, however, all this was left behind, and became as the dreamy reminiscence of a bygone world. In the year 1821 his father was translated to a wider and more stirring sphere, where the family life developed itself henceforth under intenser and more stimulating influences. The village of Kilsyth, situated about twelve miles east of Glasgow, at the foot of an undulating range of picturesque green hills, the gentler continuation of the more rugged Campsie Fells, contains a mixed population of hand-loom weavers, colliers, and shopkeepers, which numbered at that time about 3000 souls, and formed the centre of a parish which in its landward part contained about 2000 more. Here the wheels of life moved more swiftly. There was a greater stir of mind, greater variety of interests, greater impetus and force of existence everyway, intellectual, moral, social. The chatting groups in the market-place

and at the street corners, the merry song often sustained in full chorus, blending with the sound of the shuttle in the long loom-shops, the keen party politics and the strong and even bitter denominational sympathies, the eager and sometimes little-ceremonious canvassings of ministers and sermons, the collisions and mutual jealousies of class and class, with all the other well-known incidents of a south-country weaving village in the neighbourhood of a great industrial and commercial centre, formed altogether a scene in strong contrast to the still life of our former home. A little to the south of this little busy hive, and separated from it only by a narrow valley, stands the manse, with its sheltering thicket of planes and beeches, and commanding an extensive and beautiful prospect not only of the village and the hills, but over a long strath, level as the sea, to the far west, where the blue summit of Goatfell can be dimly descried from the parlour window in a clear day. Here our second home was established, and our deepest and most lasting home affections nurtured. It was to us a sacred and blessed spot in every sense, full of quiet pleasures, healthy activities, and gentle charities—a manse home, and a manse home of the best type, in which cheerful piety, quiet thoughtfulness, and a modest and reverend dignity of speech and carriage, formed together the purest element in which the young life could develop itself and receive its first impressions of truth and duty. Here of course, as elsewhere, it was the parent that made the home, and in this respect I think we were happy beyond the lot of most. Our father, gentle, reverend, gracious, full of kind thoughts, devout affections, and fresh

genial sympathies—serious without moroseness, cheerful and even sometimes gay without lightness, zealous, diligent, conscientious without a touch of impetuous haste, and carrying about with him withal an atmosphere of calm repose and staid, measured dignity, which in these bustling days is becoming increasingly rare—he was the very model of a type of the Christian pastorate which is fast passing away; the father alike and the friend of his whole parish, and the loving centre of everything kind and good and true that is passing within its bounds. To him our mother was in some respects the direct counterpart. Of a nimble buoyant active frame, alike of body and mind, she was all light and life and motion, and was as it were the glad sunshine and bright angel of a house which had been otherwise too still and sombre. There was not in those days under their roof much direct and systematic home education. The influence and teaching of the place was rather felt, or experienced without being felt, than visibly obtruded and pressed upon us. "My father's government was rather calm and strong, than bustling and energetic; he was a regulating and steadying power, rather than a busy executive. He was, in short, felt rather as a presence than seen as an agency; the element in which we lived, the atmosphere which we breathed day by day; something, in short, which was as it were presupposed, and in its silent influence entered into everything that was thought, felt, planned, enjoyed, or suffered within our little world. We were not often or much with him, not so much, I think, as would as a general thing be desirable. His calm and unimpulsive temperament here, as elsewhere, fitted him

to act rather by continuous influence, than by distinct and specific efforts. A casual rencounter in the garden walk or in the harvest field; a forenoon drive to some neighbouring manse or country house; half an hour's private reading with his boys in the study before breakfast; above all, the Sabbath evening hour of catechising and prayer; these, with now and then the reading aloud in the fireside circle of some interesting and popular volume, a task in which he greatly delighted and much excelled—were the chief occasions of direct intercourse and influence between the father and the child. Sometimes, too, along the garden walk at eventide, or through a partition wall at midnight, the ejaculated words of secret meditation and prayer would reach our ears and hearts, like the sounding of the high-priest's bells within the vail."[1] It was in this way that the first touch of serious thought I ever observed in my brother was brought to light. We had lain long awake in our common sleeping chamber after some months of separation, talking eagerly of all our ideas and plans of life, in which as yet God and heaven had little share, when the well-known sound from within the sanctuary was heard in the silence. He was hushed at once at least to momentary seriousness, and whispered: "There can be no doubt where *his* heart is, and where he is going." It was not long before the great, decisive change took place, and may possibly have been the first living seed of grace that sunk into his heart.—But the more active manage-

[1] *The Pastor of Kilsyth:* a brief biography of Mr. Burns' father, published some years ago, from which this sketch of the home life at Kilsyth is partly taken.

ment of the household and of the home education was safe in the hands of his more nimble and lively partner, who seemed made, if any one ever was, to make home and home duties happy. "Herself the very soul of springy activity and elastic cheerfulness, she kept all around her alive and stirring; while by the infection of her own blithesome and courageous spirit, labour became light and duty pleasant. Never was she so much at home as when, in one of those occasional inundations of friendly kith and kin to which our large connection and central situation exposed us, the manse became too narrow for its inmates, and double-bedded rooms and extemporized shake-downs became the order of the day. Was there now and then, amid this universal quickness and alacrity, a slight tinge of sharpness in chiding the dreamy loiterer and the handless slut? Perhaps so: yet we children scarcely saw it, to whom she ever spoke in the true mother tones of gentleness and love. From her lips and at her knees we learned our earliest lessons of truth, and in her voice and face first traced, as in a clear mirror, the lineaments of that gentle and loving godliness which hath the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."[1] Such was the element in which my brother's earliest years were spent, and in which his first experiences of life were formed. There was another household, with which, second to our own, our most hallowed thoughts of home and of home life were associated—the manse of Strathblane, situated about twelve miles from Kilsyth, in a quiet valley at the foot

[1] *The Pastor of Kilsyth.*

of Ballagan, at the other end of the Campsie range. Dr. William Hamilton, the head of that household, and the father of the better known and well-beloved Dr. James Hamilton of London, was my father's ancient friend, and in former days had been used, while the assistant minister of a church in Dundee, to visit us, especially at communion times, in our old home at Dun. His stately form, and a certain almost prophetic majesty of mien and bearing, powerfully impressed us, and his image and voice, as he paced up and down the manse parlour, in eager discourse or with rapt air reciting some favourite snatch of sacred song, remained ever afterwards a cherished tradition in the family. When in after-years the two friends found themselves again established within easy distance of each other, the old relation was resumed, and was kept up not only by the official interchange of services at communion times, but by a cordial intimacy between the families which was signalized by occasional comings and goings in bright summer days along the romantic valley between. Those visits were always seasons of high enjoyment, and revealed to us a phase of the Christian home which was to us in some measure new. Dr. Hamilton was a man far above the common standard of his class and of his time, alike in intellectual stature and in moral elevation and strength. A ripe scholar, a profound divine, and a minister of singular fervour and sanctity, he was characterized at the same time by an enlargement and enlightened liberality of view in regard to all public questions civil and religious, at once admirable and rare. He was an ardent friend of the missionary cause

while that cause was yet in its infancy and still suffered the full brunt of the world's scorn. He was a reformer at a time when, to nine-tenths of his order, reform, associated with ideas of revolution and church destruction, was a name of terror. I remember during the days of the Reform Bill, when the whole land was astir with the excitement and the fear of a movement which seemed to most of us like an irruption of the Vandals, hearing with dismay, how a bannered host of workmen from the print-fields in his neighbourhood had actually, at his own desire, filed, to the sound of drum, past his manse, encamped on the green lawn before the door, and received from the good pastor not only words of kindly counsel and encouragement, but "good cheer" also of another and more substantial kind. But it was in his study that he was most at home and in his glory. He had a hunger for books, which fortunately his ample means enabled him to gratify by the accumulation of stores which overflowed far beyond their proper sanctuary into every available nook and corner of the house, and which seemed to us, accustomed to more common things, one of the wonders of the world. The spirit of the father infected the children, and diffused through the place an air of studious application and still quietude which was almost cloistral. Yet was the house happy and cheerful withal. The favourite sports and pastimes, indeed, were like everything else about the place, of the intellectual cast, but none the less on that account bright and gladsome,—a boyish lecture to the literary society at the neighbouring print-fields; an animated

discussion of the respective merits of Wilberforce and Brougham, and Grey, and Henry Melville and Dr. Chalmers; or a mock trial in the parlour in the evening, in which boys and girls alike bore their share, and the several parts of judge, jury, panel, and pleading counsel were sustained with an ability and gravity which alike astonished and confounded us. How vividly do I recall the very look and voice with which a fair and gentle girl, "the little one" and the favourite of the family, came forward, with a blithesome air which sadly belied her grim part, shouting, "I'm to be the panel." James, of course, was senior counsel for the crown, as well as the presiding genius of the whole scene; William, his younger brother, and now a respected minister of the Free Church, sat, duly bewigged and gowned, as the most reverend judge, while the remaining parts, I am afraid, broke sadly down in my brother's hands and mine. Altogether it was one of the brightest and holiest spots I have ever known on earth—a place which angels might well visit, or desire to look into in passing by on errands of mercy and grace; so that it seems quite in the natural course of things that there should have proceeded from it the author of the *Mount of Olives* and the *Happy Home*. We returned musing many thoughts, and feeling that we had got a look into a world to which, accustomed to a more outward and muscular style of life, we had been in great measure strangers. My brother's bent, especially, was at this time decidedly in the "muscular" direction. He gave far greater promise of becoming a mighty hunter than a deep student bearing the pale hue of thought.

Strong of limb and of sanguine temperament, his heart was in the open fields and woods, and in all manner of manly and athletic exercises. He spent long days with his fishing-rod on the Carron water on the other side of the hills, along with a congenial friend from the village. He wandered for hours along the hedges and through the fields with an old carabine, borrowed from the village blacksmith, in search of sparrows and crows. He was famous for lifting up his axe upon the thick trees, at one time clearing the whole precincts of the superfluous growth of years by his unaided strength. He did yeoman's service on occasions in the hay or corn fields, and was in great request by the "minister's man" when a sudden emergency called for the aid of a volunteer force. I do not remember, at that time, any books which greatly interested him except these two—the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which he read over and over again during a time of confinement occasioned by an accident, and the *Life of Sir William Wallace*, bought with a half-crown given him when a very little boy by Dr. Hamilton. There were, however, few books then fitted to arrest the attention and stir the minds of the young, and especially of boys. There were no *Martin Rattlers*, or *Old Jacks*, or *Tom Browns*. Even such as there were had in their outward appearance a most uninviting aspect. The rude engravings of former days had just been banished, in the interests of high art and good taste, and the more graceful illustrations of present times had not yet come in. Thus the most enchanting of books had, just at that particular juncture, a most

repulsive aspect. The *Pilgrim's Progress* was without an effigy even of Giant Pope or the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains. *Robinson Crusoe* was without the shaggy umbrella and the footprint on the shore. Even the *Scots Worthies* and the *Book of Martyrs* were mere acres of black type, without one solemn gleam of the gathered faggots and the aspiring flames, and of the clasped hands and uplifted eyes of martyr faith and victory. Thus there was comparatively little then to allure or to keep within doors a stirring boy, urged by a strong physical impulse toward the open fields and woods. Meanwhile, however, the essential matters of a common school education went on satisfactorily. He attended, all the time of his residence at home, the parish school of the place, then under the care of the Rev. Alexander Salmon, afterwards of Paisley and Sydney, a teacher of rare intelligence and skill, who was among the first Scottish schoolmasters to avail himself of the modern improved methods of tuition, and to substitute an intellectual interest for the old iron sway of the ferula. I have myself a most vivid recollection of the very time when the grim reign of terror came to an end, and the halcyon days of lively questioning and kindly moral influence began. Here my brother did his work well, and kept a good place in all his classes. He became a good reader, a good arithmetician and accountant, and learned, at least in a certain rough way, the elements of Latin; without, however, any kindlings of desire after further attainments in the higher learning. His thoughts were still all outward, and his highest ambition and

declared resolution to be a country farmer, like the fathers of most of his school companions and friends. And yet, even then, a touch of deeper feeling would now and then betray itself, which revealed the hidden fire that slumbered within. A touching instance of this I very vividly remember. The population of a dovecot which he owned as his special property, had become redundant, and the decree had gone forth from the higher powers that some of his favourites should fall a sacrifice to the public good. Yielding reluctant to the stern necessity, he undertook himself the office of executioner, which he deemed would be more mercifully discharged by his own hand than by any other; and planting himself carabine in hand at the corner of a wall at a little distance, took his aim resolutely but tremblingly at one of the devoted flock perched on the ridge of the house, between him and the sky. The shot missed its mark, but unhappily only partially. The poor bird was sorely wounded in the foot, but not killed; and gathering up the broken and bleeding limb beneath its wing, stood on the other, silent and motionless, a spectacle of agony. Instantly his heart smote him for the deed he had done; he was now, to his own sense, no more the executioner, but the cruel murderer; and he stood there rooted to the spot for hours together, as in bitter penance, gazing up with streaming eyes to the hapless victim, which seemed in its turn to look down reproachfully upon him. The whole scene, which is distinctly before me now, might almost have reminded one of Rispah, the daughter of Aiah, in her long watch beside the bodies of her

slaughtered sons, "when she took sackcloth and spread it for her on the rock, from the beginning of harvest, until water dropped upon them out of heaven." A circumstance, however, which now transpired, changed at once the whole course of his thoughts, and opened a new, and, as the event proved, a most momentous chapter in his life. A maternal uncle, a respected lawyer in Aberdeen, who happened to visit us at this time, not approving of the farming project, kindly invited William, then in his thirteenth year, to spend a winter with him, and take advantage of the higher training of the grammar-school of that city, then at the very height of its fame, under the distinguished rectorship of the Rev. Dr. James Melvin. I must here indulge myself with a passing tribute to the memory of a revered teacher, to whom my brother, with myself and many others, owed much—then well known within his own sphere, but since his death far more widely, as one of the first classical scholars of his day, and, more perhaps than any other man, the reviver in modern times of exact scholarship, and especially of Latin scholarship, in Scotland. In doing so, I avail myself of the graphic pencil of a distinguished alumnus of the school, who has with fond and loving hand drawn the portrait of his revered master:—"I have known many other men," says the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, "since I knew him—men of far greater celebrity in the world, and of intellectual claims of far more rousing character than belong to Latin scholarship—but I have known no one, and I expect to know no one, so perfect in his type as Melvin. Every man whose memory

is tolerably faithful can reckon up those to whom he is himself indebted; and trying to estimate at this moment the relative proportions of influence from this man and from that man encountered by me, which I can still feel running in my veins, it so happens that I can trace none more distinct, however it may have been marred and mudded, than that stream which as Melvin gave it was truly 'honey wine.' . . . . During our three years in the under-classes we saw Melvin only incidentally, and on the weekly gathering of the whole school in the public school-room; while the fact that he wore a gown and kept his hat on, while the other three masters were without gowns and had their hats off, greatly impressed the young ones. His authority over the other masters was never made in the least apparent, but it was felt to exist; and there was always an awful sense of what might be the consequence of an appeal to him in a case of discipline. No such appeal in my day ever ended in anything more serious than a public verbal rebuke; but that was terrible enough. For the aspect of the man—then in the prime of manhood, lean, but rather tall and well-shouldered, and with a face of the pale-dark kind, naturally austere, and made more stern by the marks of the small-pox—was unusually awe-compelling. The name 'Grim,' or more fully, 'Grim Pluto,' had been bestowed upon him, after a phrase in one of the lessons, by one of his early classes; and this name was known to all the school. When he entered the school gate the whisper in the public school would be, 'Here's Grim;' and, as he walked through the school into his own class-room, look-

ing neither right nor left, with his gold watch-chain and seals dangling audibly as he went, all would be hushed. And yet, with all this fear of him, there was an affection and a longing to be in his classes, to partake of that richer and finer instruction of which we heard such reports.

"When one did come into the rector's immediate charge, one came to know him better. The great awe of him still remained. Stricter or more perfect order than that which Melvin kept in the two classes which he taught simultaneously, it is impossible to conceive. But it was all done by sheer moral impressiveness, and a power of rebuke, either by mere glance or by glance and word together, in which he was masterly. As a born ruler of boys, Arnold himself cannot have surpassed Melvin. And though there were wanting in Melvin's case many of those incidents which must have contributed to the complete veneration with which the Rugby boys looked at Arnold—the known reputation of the man, for example, in the wide world of thought and letters beyond the walls of the school—yet, so far as personal influence within the school was concerned, there was in Melvin some form of almost all those things that we read of in Arnold, as tending to blend love more and more, on closer intimacy, with the first feeling of reverence. Integrity and truthfulness, conjoined with a wonderful considerateness, were characteristic of all he said and did. His influence was so high-toned and strict, that, even had he taught nothing expressly, it would have been a moral benefit for a boy to have been within it. It did one good even to look at

him day after day as he sat and presided over us. As he sat now, in his own class-room, always with his hat off, one came to admire more and more, despite his grim and somewhat scarred face, the beauty of his finely-formed head, the short black hair of which, crisping close round it, defined its shape exactly, and made it more an ideal Roman head than would have been found on any other shoulders in a whole Campus Martius of the Aberdonians. One un-Roman habit he had, that of snuff-taking. But though he took snuff in extraordinary quantities, it was, if I may so say, as a Roman gentleman would have taken it—with all the dignity of the toga, and every pinch emphatic.

"In that teaching of Latin which Melvin perseveringly kept to as his particular business, a large portion of the work of his classes consisted, of course, of readings in the Latin authors, in continuation of what had been read in the junior classes. Here, unless perchance he began with a survey of the grammar, to see how we were grounded, and to rivet us afresh to the rock, we first came to perceive his essential peculiarities. Accuracy, to the last and minutest word read, and to the nicest shade of distinction between two apparent synonyms, was what he studied and insisted on, and this always with a view to the cultivation of a taste for pure and classic, as distinct from Brummagem Latinity. . . . The quantity read was not large—seldom more than a page a day—but every sentence was gone over at least five times—first read aloud by the boy that might be called on—then translated word for word with the utmost literality, each Latin word being named as the English equivalent was fitted to it—

then rendered as a whole somewhat more freely and elegantly, but still with no permission of that slovenly practice of translation which is called 'giving the spirit of the original,' then analyzed etymologically, each important verb or noun becoming the text for an exercise up and down, backwards and forwards, in all appertaining to it; and lastly, construed or analyzed in respect of its syntax and idiom, the reasons of its moods, cases and what not. . . . . Of course in the readings, whether from the prose writers or the poets, occasion was taken by Melvin to convey all sorts of minute pieces of elucidative historical and biographical information, in addition to what the boys were expected to have procured for themselves in the act of preparation, and in this way a considerable amount of curious lore about the Roman calendar, the Roman wines and the way of drinking them, &c., was gradually and accurately acquired. Never either did Melvin leave a passage of peculiar beauty of thought, expression, or sound, without rousing us to a sense of this peculiarity, and impressing it upon us, by reading the passage himself, eloquently and lovingly, so as to give effect to it. Over a line like Virgil's description of the Cyclopes working at the anvil:

Illi inter sese magnâ vi brachia tollunt,

he would linger with real ecstacy, repeating it again and again with something of a tremble of excitement in his grave voice. Perhaps, however, it was in expounding his favourite Horace that he rose oftenest to what may be called the higher criticism. It was really beautiful to

hear him dissect a passage in Horace and then put it together again thrillingly complete."

But it was in the matter of prose composition most of all, that the Aberdeen grammar-school then stood, and I believe still stands, *facile princeps* among the higher schools in Scotland. The great charm of this part of the work was the rigid and absolute accuracy which was exacted throughout, and the perfect confidence that, all being done in the school, beyond the reach of surreptitious aid from tutors and friends, everything was fair and square between one competitor and another. I believe that the universal adoption of this principle, instead of the present loose practice of giving exercises home to be manufactured any way which the lax consciences of tutors and pupils may acquiesce in, would do more than any one thing to revive the spirit of thorough scholarship in our Scottish schools. If any justification were needed of Dr. Melvin's method in this respect, it might be found in the universal interest, rising in all the better boys even to enthusiasm, which this part of the school work excited. "Two entire days in every week were devoted to 'the versions,' and these were the days of keenest emulation. In anticipation of them it was our habit to jot down in note-books of our own, divided alphabetically, and with index margins for the leading words, any specialties of phrase or idiom, any niceties about *ut*, *quum*, *quod* and *quia*, *ille* and *iste*, *uter* and *quis*, *suus* and *ejus*, *plerique* and *plurimi* and the like, upon which Melvin dwelt in the course of our readings. With these manuscript 'phrase-books' and 'idiom-books' (containing doubtless much

that might be found in print, but precious as compiled by ourselves) and with Ainsworth's *Dictionary* . . . we assembled on the morning of every 'version day,' and sure enough in the piece of English which Melvin then dictated to us, which was always a model of correct style and punctuation, and generally not uninteresting in matter, there were some of the traps laid for us against which he had been recently warning us. We sat and wrote the version—those who were done first (generally the first faction boys) going up to Melvin's desk to have them examined—who then became his assistants in examining the other versions so as to clear them all within the day.[1] . . . The system of marking was peculiar. You were classed, not by your positive merits of ingenuity, elegance and such like, but as in the world itself, by your freedom from faults or illegalities. Only between two versions coequal in respect of freedom from error was any positive merit of elegance allowed to decide the superiority. . . . . There were three grades of error—the *minimus*, or as we called it, the *minie*, which counted as 1, and included misspellings, wrong choices of words, &c.; the *medius*, or *midie*, which counted as 2, and included false tenses and other such slips; and the *maximus*, or *maxie*, which counted as 4, and included wrong genders, a glaring

[1] This does not exactly agree with my recollections. In my time it was only versions from the lower regions of the class that were committed to such 'prentice hands. Every pupil who had the slightest pretensions to scholarship, or capacity for scholarship, had his exercise examined and appraised by the rector himself, either publicly before the class at the afternoon meeting or at home overnight.

indicative for a subjunctive, &c. On a maxie in the version of a good scholar, Melvin was always cuttingly severe. '*Ut* . . . *dixit*,' he would say, underscoring the two words in a sentence where the latter should have been *diceret;* '*ut* . . . *dixit*,' he would repeat, refreshing his frown with a pinch of snuff; '*ut* . . . *dixit*,' he would say a third time, with a look in the culprit's face as if he had murdered his father; 'O William, William! you have been very giddy of late;' and William would descend crestfallen, and be miserable for half a day."

There is not an old Melvinian in all the world who will not recognize this picture, or fail to authenticate with a thrill of pleasure every line and shade of it. If "William" is still alive, he will have felt that look still upon him as he read these lines, as we ourselves can at this moment recall with a shudder just such another. My brother at once felt the fascination of the place and of the man, and caught the breath of a new existence, in which all his old dreams of farming and of a country life vanished out of sight. He fought his way steadily up the class till he reached the genial and exhilarating air of the highest "faction," and closed the session as one of the rector's best and most trusted scholars. When he returned home, even after the interval of a college session, his talk was still of Melvin and of the grammar-school, and was of such an enthusiastic kind as to kindle in me an irrepressible longing to explore the same Eldorado of golden knowledge and pure classic lore. The effects of the mental discipline thus acquired were

lasting, and had an important influence on the whole course of his future life, forming in him once for all those habits of rigid accuracy, thorough work, and conscientious regard for rule and law which ever afterwards distinguished him; while at the same time awakening and training that remarkable faculty for the study of language which stood him in such good stead in the missionary labours of later years. From the school he passed to the University, standing fifth on the list of bursars or open scholars in Marischal College, from among more than a hundred competitors; and after two successive sessions, in which he obtained honourable distinction in all his classes, returned home in the spring of 1831, having completed, as was then thought, his education and full preparation for the work of his life. The nature of that work he had already chosen. His residence with his uncle at Aberdeen had had naturally enough the same effect upon him as the companionship of farmers' sons at the Kilsyth parish school, and he was now accordingly as decidedly set on the profession of the law, as before on a country life. His father, who had earnestly desired his dedication to the Christian ministry, gave his reluctant consent, and a few months afterwards he was settled with his uncle, Mr. Alexander Burns, a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, with the view of being bound as an apprentice, so soon as the necessary certificates from his college professors could be obtained.

But "man proposeth, God disposeth." "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the

earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." God had "girded" him for a far higher and nobler work than that which he had chosen for himself, though as yet "he did not know Him." Before all the certificates had arrived, and while yet the last of them was impatiently waited for, a change had taken place in the spirit of his mind, which translated him at once as into a new world and gave a new direction to his whole after-life. The extant memorials of the memorable event are not abundant, but explicit and deeply interesting. "While William was at Aberdeen," writes an elder sister, "a great change had come over our eldest sister, who from a life of gaiety in Edinburgh during two winters, was turned most decidedly with her face Zionwards, and left Edinburgh for ever. She returned to our quiet manse, desiring, whatever others did, that she might serve the Lord; and from this service she never drew back, but her path was as the shining light shining more and more until the perfect day—at Pesth, 18th February, 1865—when she passed into glory. I think the year 1831 was a year of grace in our family. I remember we began a practice of reading aloud between dinner and tea some religious book. Bridges on the *119th Psalm* was with our sister a special favourite, and means of grace. On these occasions dear William, to our sorrow, without saying a word always slipped out, and he was to our view the least likely subject of grace in the family. He always vehemently rejected the idea of being a minister, and said he wished to be a lawyer, because he 'saw lawyers rich and with fine houses.' Oh! what a

contrast his after-life was to this! for one more conformed to his Saviour, in self-denial and in voluntary poverty, the world has never seen—at least one who was all this, without false asceticism or self-righteous pride.

"When, in this spirit, William went to Edinburgh to be bound apprentice to our uncle A. with the view of being a W.S., we mourned over him as one going to be 'bound' to the world; and this view seemed to have come over his own mind when he found the different kind of society he was thrown into, from what he left behind in the manse. A joint letter we wrote him, to which he often afterwards referred as one of the chief means of awakening him, has passed from my mind, and a single sentence quoted from it in a letter of his which still remains is all that is left. The first dawn of hope regarding him is to be found in a letter of date 5th December, 1831, in which the following for him remarkable words occur, 'I am extremely obliged to you for your excellent letter, also to papa, and I look forward to our correspondence as a thing that shall afford me great pleasure when I am fairly settled away from that *dear* home where I have enjoyed so many *happy* days, and where in all likelihood I shall never be resident again. I wish you would recommend me to, or send me some good religious reading.' This request astonished us, and I think we sent him Boston's *Fourfold State*. Very soon after this he suddenly and unexpectedly walked in one evening into the dining-room at the old manse, with a graver look than was his wont; and in answer to our mother's exclamation, Oh! Willie, where have you come from? his answer was gravely, 'From Edinburgh.'

'How did you come?' 'I walked' [a distance of 36 miles]. There was then a silence, and standing on the hearth-rug, with his back to the fire, he said, 'What would you think, mamma, if I should be a minister after all?' His countenance showed that he was speaking in earnest, and he then told openly how the Lord had arrested him, and that he had no rest in his spirit till he should come home and obtain his parents' consent to relinquish the law and give himself to the service of Jesus in the ministry of the gospel. The inner history of this wonderful change you have in his own diary—this is as I *saw* it; and far distant as is the day, I remember it vividly, and my feeling was that I was standing in the presence of a miracle. I could not contain my feelings, but rushed along the long passage which led to our father's study, and shutting the door threw myself on my knees and wept. After being a short time at home, he returned to Edinburgh with our parents' joyful consent to his being what they had long wished and prayed for—a minister of the everlasting gospel. By a singular providence he was free to do so. He had not been bound apprentice, owing to a delay in the arrival of one of his certificates of attendance at college; and it was during this interval that the whole current of his life was changed. It may be right to add that William had been all along, so far as ever known to me, perfectly free from all *outward vice*. I never knew of an act of duplicity or a bad word. This I think is important to be mentioned, as from his deep views of sin, he during all the course of his spiritual life spoke of himself in such terms of self-loathing, that those unacquainted

with the facts might naturally suppose that he had been turned to God from a life of open sin, as indeed is broadly hinted in an Aberdeen document recently given to the world."[1]

Such was the event so far as it could be seen from the outside, even by those who stood the nearest to it. Happily we have another and still more authentic record of it from his own hand—a solemn deposition as before God, in regard to a sacred secret, over which before man he ever cast the veil of a deep and reverent reserve. It was drawn forth by a sudden gush of reminiscence, when, ten years afterwards, and after his own new life had become the germ of similar life to thousands of other souls, he unexpectedly found himself, in the course of a solitary evening walk, in the midst of those scenes which were linked to him with such infinite and deathless memories:—

"*Edin., Tuesday, Nov.* 16, 1841.—To-day I was chiefly occupied, as far as business is concerned, in preparing for the press the letters I sent some time ago to the Greenside Place school. In taking the air I walked over scenes which were indeed fitted to speak aloud of mercy to my favoured soul. I walked along York Place, and looked up to the windows of the room (No. 41, west side, upper flat) where,

[1] It may be of more importance for me to state that my own thorough belief is in entire accordance with that here expressed. As a brother nearly of the same age, I had been constantly with him and shared his inmost thoughts; and I always understood from him that he had begun to tread those paths of folly which often lead to open sin, but never passed over the verge of the precipice. On the contrary, he seemed to regard it as a singular mercy from the Lord, that the effectual call of grace had come just in time to save him from a ruin otherwise, as it seemed to him, inevitable.

when reading Pike's *Early Piety* on a Sabbath afternoon, I think about the middle of December, 1831, an arrow from the quiver of the King of Zion was shot by his Almighty sovereign hand through my heart, though it was hard enough to resist all inferior means of salvation. Who can understand the feelings with which I again revisited the spot. Alas! the windows in the roof above met my eye, as the place where a few months afterwards (in 1832) poor Uncle Alexander died in one day of cholera! Oh! what a contrast between the scenes of mercy and judgment exhibited by God in places so near each other! From this I walked down and revisited my old lodgings, No. 69 Broughton Place, where my earliest days as a child of grace were spent, and where first the Spirit of God shone with full light upon the glory of Jesus as a Saviour for such as I was. This was, I think, about the 7th of January, 1832. Although it was then, I remember, that the light of God first shone fully and transportingly on his word, and into my heart, I was never from the beginning, three weeks before, in utter darkness, but felt that God had been always willing to save me, that I was a self-murderer, and that now He was in his own *sovereignty* touching my heart and drawing me to himself for his own glory; and again, though about the time mentioned, I remembered to have beheld transporting wonders in God's law, yet my peace following on this was far different indeed from a settled quiet frame of mind. I had many fears and many awful struggles with sin and Satan, and many sleepless nights of mingling joy and fear, and faith and hope, and love. Ebenezer! Halleluiah! Halleluiah! Amen.

"*Wednesday.*—Yesterday morning I breakfasted with Mr. Bruce, and this morning with Mr. Brown (C. J. B.); on both occasions we had interesting conversations. Mr. Bruce seemed pleased to be reminded of old events, and promised to give me the dates of several sermons which I was benefited by when preached. The means by which my change of heart was brought about were these, I think—Mr.

Bruce's preaching, which engaged me much, and the fear of sudden death from the approach of cholera, were preparatory. A letter from my sisters at home, in which they spoke in a single sentence of going as pilgrims to Zion, and leaving me behind, proved a word in season and touched my natural feelings very deeply; for when sin had rendered me dead to every other feeling, I could not think of my Christian parents, and my godly home with all its sweet and solemn privileges, without an awful conflict of soul at the thought of parting with them for ever. I could think of parting with Christ, for I knew him not—alas! do I yet know him?—but to part with them was too much for me to bear. In this way the way was prepared, but as yet I am fully conscious that my heart was spiritually dead. However the set time came. I sat down, with solemn impressions arising from the causes now mentioned, to read a part of Pike's *Early Piety*, which my dear father had given me at leaving home; (Ah! little did he know what use God was to make of it, little did the author of that solemn treatise know one of the purposes for which he wrote it;) and in one moment, while gazing on a solemn passage in it, my inmost soul was in one instant pierced as with a dart. God had apprehended me. I felt the conviction of my lost estate rushing through me with resistless power; I left the room and retired to a bedroom, there to pour out my heart for the first time with many tears in a genuine heart-rending cry for mercy. From the first moment of this wonderful experience I had the inspiring hope of being saved by a sovereign and infinitely gracious God; and in the same instant almost I felt that I *must* leave my present occupation, and devote myself to Jesus in the ministry of that glorious gospel by which I had been saved. From that day to this, blessed be Jehovah, I have been conscious more or less deeply of the possession of a *new* and holy principle, leading me to live by the faith of Jesus to the glory of God, and in the communion of the Holy Ghost. Salvation unto our God, who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb!"

The only other extant memorial of this eventful time is contained in the following letter to his sisters, written soon after his unexpected visit to Kilsyth, and which is the first surviving blossom of the new life that had dawned upon him:—

"*Edinburgh, February 20th*, 1832.—MY DEAR SISTERS,— . . . . I feel it often a great encouragement to me to persevere in that *life* upon which I have entered, that I do not *make for heaven alone;* but though there be few that find 'the strait gate' and the 'narrow way,' yet that my nearest and *dearest* friends upon earth are my fellow-pilgrims to the 'heavenly Canaan.' Let us encourage and exhort one another in following and *trusting* in the *Lamb* who was slain, and who now intercedes for all who trust in him, at the right hand of the Father. I have been apt, as is I believe the case with many young Christians, to make my safety depend upon my feelings, and consequently to feel miserable when not engaged in religious exercises, and to despise in some degree the ordinary business of life; but I have for some time past been coming to juster and more stable views. I had another conversation with Mr. Bruce about a week ago; I was as much as on the former occasion delighted with him, and I trust edified. He had two admirable discourses last Sabbath (yesterday), the one a lecture from the 7th and 8th verses of the 6th of Matthew, and the other from Ephesians, 3d chapter and 12th verse, 'In whom we have boldness,' &c. They were both very much suited to my state, and I trust I was much benefited by them. . . . . Mr. Moody and I are on the most intimate terms; he is one of the few that *live near* to God. . . .

"If the Lord spare us all, I look forward to the happiest meeting that ever we have had. We are now, my dearest sisters, linked together by a new tie, being members of the same *body*, and the children of the Almighty, our Father in heaven: but till then let us pray daily to Him for *one another*,

and seek a nearer communion with Him to whom we have access with *confidence* by the blood of Jesus. Let not the question be with us, 'How near must we be to him in order to insure our safety?' but how much *communion can* we possibly attain to while here on earth. This is not our home, 'for we are *dead*, and our *life* is hid with *Christ* in God.' 'When He who is our *life* shall appear, then shall we also appear with *Him* in glory.' What a hope is this, That *our* eyes shall see Him, and that we shall dwell with Him for ever and ever! He now makes intercession for us at the Father's right hand. May *we* be 'kept by the POWER of God through faith unto salvation.' Let us have but *one* object in view, the kingdom of heaven, and all other *necessary* things shall be added unto us. All things shall work together for the *eternal* good of them that love God, and we must *wait* upon the Lord that he may give us this love. There is no object in this world, the contemplation of which is an adequate employment for that immortal and divine principle in us—'the soul,' except the character of the 'Lord of Hosts;' with the contemplation of which, although we were to devote our entire lives, yet would we be compelled to exclaim, 'Thou art past finding out;' and this is the God to whom *we* approach with so little humility and contrition of soul. How wonderful that he should not only listen to *us* when we call on Him, but condescend to work in us by his Holy Spirit exciting us to draw near unto Him. We ought to strive to bring our fellow-creatures to a knowledge of their state, and of the mercy that is freely offered them: it is truly an awful thought, that any one to whom the gospel is proclaimed should go down to that lake *that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever.* People are apt to think themselves *independent* creatures, and that none has a right to their services; but if we do not take *God's* mercy in Christ Jesus, we must take His *wrath.* I pity most of all those whom we call *decent* people, who, although they will hardly believe it, are in as unsafe a state as the openly profligate, as they

do not build on Christ as the foundation. . . . The cholera is going on here though slowly, and I hope we may all be mercifully spared; but let us endeavour to say from the heart, 'The will of the Lord be done.' I have a letter to —— ready, which I expect to have an opportunity of forwarding this week. Let us pray earnestly for him, that the Lord would open his heart to the truth; that we may go *all on together* to that blessed country to which Christ has purchased an admittance for all who trust in and follow Him. I cannot tell you *all* nor *any* of my thoughts on paper, but wait for a meeting with you, if the Lord will. Till then farewell.—I remain, my dearest sisters, your truly affectionate brother,—WM. C. BURNS."

He remained still for a short time in the office of his uncle, who had already formed an exalted estimate of his ability and aptitude for business, and of his prospects of future success, and who parted from him with unfeigned regret.

In the course of the summer he returned to Kilsyth, and by the beginning of November he was once more in Aberdeen, to resume the broken thread of his studies, with a view to the ministry of the Church of Scotland.

CHAPTER II.

1832—1839.

PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

MY brother's remaining years of study at Aberdeen present nothing particularly worthy of record, except a visibly heightened tone of earnestness and energy in all his work, due to the higher motives and principles which now inspired him. A true Christian, he became more than ever an earnest student. Having learned to be faithful in that which is much, he became faithful as never before in that which is least. The result was seen in the higher place taken by him in all his classes, and in the University distinctions which began more than ever to crowd upon him. In his third year he was awarded the first place of honour in the senior mathematical class, and in the next following session he gained by public competition, along with another who was bracketted with him, the mathematical scholarship, then and for long afterwards the highest attainable distinction in the University; while in all the other branches of study he held a distinguished place. In other and higher matters meanwhile, he held on his constant way—not of course in a path of unclouded sunshine and uninterrupted progress, but consistently and

steadfastly. The fresh and blessed experience which had attended his entrance on the spiritual life had indeed passed away, and been succeeded by an ebb of feeling over which he bitterly mourned; but the holy stream, fed by an inexhaustible spring, was never dried up, or ceased to flow in a strong and steady current. His religion, indeed, at this time was rather calm, serious, strict, and resolutely conscientious, than specially ardent and exalted; characterized rather by unflinching decision and strength of principle, than by any peculiar elevation of feeling or depth of spiritual experience. His life was more of the usual type, and moved more in the customary channels of Christian profession and obedience, than in after-years. There seems even to have been in him a certain tinge of the artificial and the legal —a tendency not uncommon with young disciples when called openly to confess Christ in the presence of those who have known them before in the days of their ignorance, to maintain a higher standard of outward profession and observance than is fully sustained by the state of the heart within. Of this he bitterly accuses himself in his first letter to his sister after his return to Aberdeen, and which is the only surviving fragment of his correspondence belonging to this period of his life:

Aberdeen, Friday, Nov. 16, 1832.—. . . "In regard to my own state of mind, I can say little that is pleasing. When I came here my spiritual state was very low, but I hoped that the necessity which I knew there was of my walking carefully would, by God's blessing, have had a beneficial effect, making me seek nearness to Him and strength for all my emergencies; but I lament to say, I

have been disappointed. During the first few days after my arrival, I am sensible of having been guilty of much hypocrisy, striving to make it appear that I was indeed converted, while I felt myself to be far from God, and acting I fear rather for the upholding of my own reputation than with a view to the glory of God. I might say much on this subject, but feel at this moment that although my entering on it is calculated to be beneficial to me, in bringing it more immediately before my own mind, and calling forth your earnest prayers in my behalf; yet the very feeling of having expressed my mind upon this subject may prove a snare to me, leading me to suppose that I have retraced my steps to the Cross of Christ, while I remain in reality unwilling to become His *wholly* and His *only*. May the Lord in His great mercy teach me my real character, and lead me to some just conception of His perfect holiness and hatred of sin, that I may prize as I ought that salvation which He has provided, and be made to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus! The counsel and sympathy of dear friends are then especially effective when they are absent; for as we delight to think of again meeting after being for a time separated, our views are directed to that blessed abode where alone there is a security of our dwelling in sweet and uninterrupted communion."

The state of mind thus expressed will not be difficult of comprehension to any who like him, after a spiritual crisis of more than usual decisiveness, have descended all at once to the common level of ordinary practical life. Clearly the views and convictions which then opened on his soul remained unchanged, but the fresh impressions and strong emotions which had given life and force to them had for the moment passed away. He still thought as justly, but he felt less intensely, and therefore moved

and acted less buoyantly. He was faint, but he was still pursuing the same high end, and held his face unswervingly in the same direction. They who thus wait on the Lord, even though they may for a season faint and be weary, shall renew their strength. Though like the moulting bird they may droop as if ready to die, a new life will soon stir within them, and bear them upwards as on eagles' wings. Even in the dead calm and when the loose sails hang idly down, let us remember still the haven whither we are going, and turn our eyes ever wistfully thither, and the heavenly gales will surely soon return. How eminently this was so in the case of the subject of this memoir we shall in the sequel see. Even now the declension over which he mourned was more apparent than real—rather the mere transition from the flush of the morning to the light of common day, than any actual retrogression or even obscuration of the Sun. Meanwhile the light that was in him, dim and feeble as it seemed to himself, was not darkened, and could not be hid from others. "My mind," says Dr. Murray Mitchell, an old class-fellow, and now missionary of the Free Church of Scotland at Calcutta, "goes back to Aberdeen, and 1829, or rather November, 1828, when I first became acquainted with your brother. We were class-fellows, at school and college, for three years. He then discontinued attending college for a year, with the intention I think of giving himself to the study of law. When he returned to Aberdeen he was an altered man. He came back full of holy earnestness, having in the meantime sustained the greatest revolution of which the spirit of

man is susceptible, and seeking now every opportunity to converse with his old companions regarding Christ and His salvation." With this statement my own recollections of this period entirely accord. It was a time with him, I think, of steady, though not of marked or conspicuous progress. He was earnest and decided in his Christian profession beyond the standard of most, but still according to the ordinary style of the Christians of that time; nor had that overmastering sense of eternal things and of the infinite worth of souls, which at an after period carried him beyond all the barriers of conventional rule, and could be bound by no restraints but the clear and eternal laws of God, yet manifested itself.

Taking his degree with honourable distinction in 1834, he proceeded in the winter of that year to the University of Glasgow, with the view of prosecuting his further studies for the ministry there. The intellectual life of that ancient and famed seat of learning was in those days, so far at least as the public teaching was concerned, rather more conspicuous in the literary than in the theological department. The revered professor of divinity, Dr. Stevenson Macgill, had by that time fallen into the "sere and yellow leaf," and no longer exercised that effective influence over the minds of his pupils which he had done in earlier years. The air of the church history class was indescribably slumbrous, and reminded one now of Spenser's Cave of Morpheus and now of Bunyan's Enchanted Ground; while our Hebrew studies were superintended by a professor of much intelligence certainly, but who knew almost nothing of Hebrew, and

opened his course rather significantly by an elaborate refutation of the vowel-points. In the literary and philosophical departments again all was life and energy; and there was altogether, I think, about the place more of a true academic spirit than existed at that time anywhere else in Scotland. In the Greek class-room, especially, under the most fascinating and eloquent of teachers, Sir Daniel K. Sandford, there was an element of high enthusiasm which no one then at the University can have forgotten, and of which old pupils still speak with a rapture that almost looks like extravagance. The very music of his voice as he read the sounding lines of Homer, apart even from the brilliant translation and the rich feast of illustrative commentary and apt quotation, was a thing to go and hear. Within this charmed circle my brother was soon drawn, and supplemented by two successive sessions in Sandford's senior class the more elementary studies of his undergraduate course. At the same time the more proper work of the divinity hall was not neglected. If there was little life in the class-room there was great life in the library, and around it. There were men at the hall at that time who were not likely to suffer any society of which they were members to sink into stagnation and ennui—such as James Halley, James Hamilton, William Arnot, Norman Macleod, with others of kindred spirit, though less widely known. No doubt, however, the systematic study of scientific theology must have suffered greatly from the want of the due direction and stimulus. What was done in the way of special lines of reading, in connection with a class exercise or a University prize theme, was rather

occasional and spasmodic, than methodical and sustained. Such incidental calls, however, to studious application my brother promptly obeyed, and improved most strenuously. Returning from Aberdeen about the middle of April, after completing my own undergraduate course, I found him still in his rooms in Glasgow, working at the last of a long series of prize essays on Old Testament subjects for the Hebrew class, in which he had maintained a strenuous competition with another student throughout the entire winter; and either in this or in a subsequent session he devoted much thought and labour to an essay on the characteristics of Hellenistic Greek for a University medal, which he was fortunate enough to obtain. Altogether it quite struck me, that the atmosphere of student life in which he was now living was decidedly of a more living and stimulating kind than that which I had left behind. In the higher matters of the spirit it undoubtedly was so. Not only was there a higher tone of religious earnestness among the better part of the students generally, but there were among them individual instances of eminent devotedness and rare elevation of character, which could not fail to tell with quickening effect on others, and especially on one whom divine grace had made so susceptible to such impressions. Amongst these, besides James Hamilton, I would particularly mention the names of James Denniston, a fellow-student of his own in the divinity hall, and Charles Birrel, then an undergraduate in the University, and since an eminent minister of the Baptist communion in England. With these, and with other junior students

whom in after-years he gathered more and more around him, he spent many hallowed hours of sweet communion in conference and in prayer, at once provoking and himself provoked to love and unto good works. Other influences there were working towards the same result, and which contributed to render this period an era in his spiritual progress, two of which I would especially commemorate. The one was the peculiar and powerful ministry of the Rev. John Duncan, then of Milton Church, Glasgow, and subsequently professor of oriental languages in the New College, Edinburgh, which during the two last years of his residence took a more and more fast hold of him, and opened to him deeper views of divine truth and more solemn aspects of the Christian calling and discipleship than he had known before. "One soweth and another reapeth;" one forges the weapon of steel, another gives it its last tempering and its keen sharp edge. And so it was ordered of God that this singular instrument of his grace, who at the beginning and further progress of his spiritual course had been helped onward by other able ministers of the word, should receive his last touch of preparation for his great work from that scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God.[1] Certainly at least it seems to me, in the retrospect of those days, as if every Sabbath spent by him in Milton Church had been as a day in Patmos, and every sermon almost as an opening of the gate of heaven.

[1] Besides Dr. Bruce, he had attended and much valued the ministry successively of Dr. John Murray, of the North Church, Aberdeen, Dr. Nathaniel Paterson, of St. Andrew's Church, and Dr. John Forbes, of St. Paul's Church, Glasgow.

The other influence was that of the Students' Missionary Society in the University of Glasgow, of which he was throughout an active and zealous, and latterly a leading and influential member. That was a sort of focus and rallying point of everything that was most earnest and Christian both in the divinity hall and in the undergraduate classes of the University; drew good men together, and placed the weak side by side with the strong; brought home to us by essay or discussion, or through the well-worn volumes of our library, the shining examples of missionary faith and heroism—the Martyns and Brainerds of the past, the Marshmans and Duffs of the present—till our hearts burned within us, and we longed to go forth and mix ourselves with life, in the great battle that was going on in the church and in the world around. Here my brother was ever peculiarly at home, and breathed an element which was to him more than any other congenial and inspiring. It was here, and especially while listening to the weighty and earnest words of a missionary about to sail for China,[1] that he first rose to the full idea of that entire and absolute consecration of his whole being and life to the service of Christ, which in his subsequent ministry so remarkably distinguished him, as well as formed his first definite purpose of devoting himself to the missionary field.

Almost the only written memorials of this period are contained in a brief correspondence with one of those sisters who stood, as we have seen, in so close a relation

[1] Dr. James Kalley, who was however prevented by the state of his health from fulfilling his purpose.

to the beginning of his spiritual life; but these will be read with interest, both as illustrating some of the statements now made, and as marking generally the growing earnestness and solemnity of his views and feelings. Most of them are without date, except that of the day of the week; but I arrange them as far as possible chronologically, as they seem to me by internal indications to date themselves. The first was written, as the date shows, in the first year of his residence in Glasgow. The rest probably all belong to the last:—

"DEAR JANE,—The accompanying packet arrived a few days ago from Paisley. Expecting it some time previously, I had prepared a few lines for you, to accompany it; but I waited in vain—and this among other causes has prevented me from sooner writing you. I am obliged to do so at present very hurriedly, but perhaps the principal interest of anything I might say would be owing to its coming from a brother who remembers you and a brother *at home;*[1] and the merest note may serve this purpose.

"Dr. Macgill, after an illness that confined him nearly four weeks, resumed his labours a few days ago, and is now proceeding with all the vigour that is compatible with advanced age and great weakness. But we are not just dependent on his lectures for a profitable employment of our time, and the loss we sustained by his temporary absence is not so material as a stranger might imagine. I am attending, besides Dr. Macgill, the professor of Hebrew Dr. Fleming, an interesting and excellent teacher. And in addition to this, I am studying French under Dr. Gerlach of the high-school. I should consider him a very admirable teacher, and I hope I am making some progress under him. . . . .

Glasgow, December 24th, 1834.

[1] His sister was then in London.

"MY DEAR JANE,—I am sorry, as usual, to be obliged to despatch the basket in so great a hurry as to prevent me answering as I could have wished your very pleasing note. It is indeed hard to be truly serious and interesting, while it is easy to be morose and dull, in the service of God; yet still we must not desist from an ardent pursuit of our high and holy calling, because of the difficulties which, from an utterly depraved heart and blinded understanding, it is encompassed with. Let us in this as in all things commit in humble but earnest faith our way to the Lord, and he *will* direct our steps—not thinking on the one hand that we can have too deep an impression of the value of immortal souls, and the danger in which we all naturally are, if it is counterbalanced on the other by a view of the glorious remedy, and the fullness and certainty of the Christian's inheritance. O that we might live nearer to God, and then indeed if our manner may appear for a little less natural, it will become at length *naturally* serious and heavenly! I have had a very dull and unfruitful week, have been conscious of more heart-atheism than I remember of feeling, but am now, I trust, desiring in some measure that this discovery of my utter depravity may by God's sovereign and precious grace be blessed to make me more humble and more grateful to the adorable Redeemer, who for such vile creatures as we descended so infinitely low and bore so much.

"I think highly of your scheme of Sabbath teaching, and hope that you will be greatly honoured and supported in it. Your affectionate brother,—WM. C. BURNS.

"*Rothesay, Thursday.* MY DEAR JANE,—I have from various causes delayed till this time writing home, in expectation, before ——'s arrival, of every day seeing some of you; and since then, waiting the opportunity of his return home. And now when the time has arrived, I am disappointed to find that, owing partly to other engagements in the evening, and partly to a doubt whether or not —— would go to-morrow morning, I must take to my desk when I should retire to rest.

I cannot however think of allowing him to go without some little supplement to the intelligence which I have no doubt he will retail among you for days to come.

"I have been enjoying Rothesay, since I saw you, in an unusual degree, the weather being so fine, and my health, in the great kindness of God, unimpaired. Nor can I reckon among the least of the present sources of pleasure the duties in which of course my time is a good deal occupied. I have an interesting little charge here, and one which I think I have increasing cause to feel at once responsible and engaging. I have this season the privilege, obtained by request from Mr. ——, of joining with my pupils in the morning exercise of reading a portion of Scripture and prayer, which gives a new facility for bringing to bear on their minds and hearts the religious influence which God may enable me to employ, and accustoms them by practice to a duty which, imperative and fundamental as it is, they are unfortunately not yet otherwise acquainted with. I have many pleasing tokens, had I time to enter into particulars, of such an interest in all my pupils in those truths which must decide their eternity, as hang one between hope and fear on their account, and demand on my part a diligence and prayerfulness, which, now that I record this truth before me, I find, more than ever, I grievously want. O that I had grace to occupy my present little talent, instead of looking forward to a larger sphere, for when may I expect to be faithful if not now, and may I not here be privileged in Jehovah's infinite loving-kindness, if ever I shall be so honoured, to tend the lambs of the fold of Jesus? it is unbelief and not faith, I find, that discourages the ambition. Let us provoke one another, my dear sister, to love and to good works; let us be steadfast in our efforts and instant in our prayers, and never forget, for *your* encouragement in the service of our Divine Master, that if I have ever yet known the precious faith of God's elect, it was a letter from you and Margaret, in which I remember you spoke of being 'pilgrims to a better

country,' that was first blessed to rouse me from the unconcern of an ungodly state.

"I wrote —— some time ago and have had a letter in reply. His circumstances appear, from his account, in many respects very favourable for his improvement.

"—— appears to have enjoyed his short stay with me exceedingly, and we have been very happy together. He is a boy of very warm heart, solid and in the main thoughtful; a hopeful subject of grace he appears to me when I contrast his character and impressions of truth, as far as I can see these, with my own at a similar age. May the Lord make him his own, and prepare him, if it be his holy will, for important service in the advancement of his cause!

"We have been thinking of you in the enjoyment of your New Testament feast. In the strength of this food may you have grace to go many days. And now farewell, my dear Jane, and give my filial and brotherly regards to all at home and at Croy. Ever yours,—WM. C. BURNS.

"*Wednesday, 26th Sept.* 1838.—MY DEAR JANE,—I hope you will not misinterpret my conduct in not answering your note on Saturday. The subject to which it referred was of too important and solemn a nature to be lightly and hastily noticed, and I desired, first, to give special thanks to the Lord for his inviting us to correspondence on such topics; and, next, to seek by prayer and fasting to obtain light from his Word, expounded by the Holy Spirit, to guide me in regard to them. The time to write you has arrived, and my conscious deadness and spiritual blindness form a new argument to convince me of the need I have of using more vigorous and regular means for obtaining that advancement in the knowledge of Christ which can alone fit me to be an instrument in his hand for the advancement of his kingdom in the world.

"I am almost afraid to speak of some things, which, I believe in common with yourself, my convictions have for some time approved of as indispensable means of our growth

in grace—my practice of these has been so irregular, and, at best, so far behind even my own dark and partial views regarding them. Yet it is the spirit of pride and legal hope, I am aware, that makes me shrink from these as if from a broken covenant, instead of casting myself again as an undone transgressor on the free covenant of promise; that in me henceforth *Christ* may live, and regulate all things according to his own good pleasure, and for his own glory!

"The great fundamental error then, as far as I can see, in the economy of the Christian life, which many, and alas! I for one commit, is that of having too *few* and too *short* periods of solemn retirement with our gracious Father and his adorable Son Jesus Christ. It is, we well know, when meditating in secret on his Word, when examining our hearts in his holy and omniscient but fatherly and gracious presence, when pouring out our complaint before him, and seeking to utter the praises of his glorious character and works—it is in these exercises that we come to know, through the teaching of the Spirit, our natural darkness, depravity, and vileness, and that the glorious Sun of Righteousness arises upon our souls with healing in his wings, giving light to us who sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. The communion of the saints in Christian converse is indeed important, nay, indispensable to the growth of the new man when it can be obtained, but when is it sweet and soul-reviving but when each brings out into the common store something of the heavenly food which he has been gathering in the closet? Whenever the holy, heavenly light of a Christian deportment is seen in any one, when we hear him bringing forth from a full heart some of the glorious things of the kingdom, we ought then to learn the lesson that 'he *has been* with Jesus,' and to go in like manner to *Him* that *we too* may obtain this living water to be in us as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. I have alluded to this subject in connection with your proposal, which I would hail with joy, for 'united prayer,' because it strikes me

from what I have felt that our object will be best attained by our stimulating each other to greatly increased fidelity in these regular and acknowledged means, instead of first adopting any special measure, which is only a burden and an impediment, except when it is like an additional channel dug for the conveyance of the waters which are overflowing their ordinary banks. O that our private and personal covenanting with the Lord were more frequent and regular! *This* would form some basis for united efforts in his service; but without it I fear we are in danger of neglecting the Lord's own ordinance for means of our own devising. For myself then, dear Jane, I intend to-morrow, D.V., solemnly to review my duty in the private exercises of God's worship, in the light of his Word; and may he grant it, of his Holy Spirit, that I may, by his promised grace, be humbled before him for past neglect of his blessed appointments, and resolve, in his strength, henceforth 'to keep his statutes,' not as a servant for his wages, but as a son from love to his Father's presence and his Father's laws. It will serve the end of these lines, dear sister, if they be a link in a chain of correspondence between us regarding the work of God in our own hearts, and around us. Such a correspondence I much desire, and much more need; and I am satisfied that had I been earlier thus engaged, I would have been more fruitful in the glorious work of the Lord, and have written, not as now I do to my shame, about the things of God with so ignorant a mind and so cold a heart. O may the love of Christ constrain us to live no more as our own, but as manifestly *his! This* is the motive that will carry us with a rejoicing heart through tribulations and distresses for his name's sake; and make us count all things but loss that we may win Christ and be found in Him, clothed upon with his spotless righteousness, and filled with his Holy Spirit. And now, desiring that the Lord Jesus may manifest himself to you in his surpassing beauty and matchless grace and love, I remain your affectionate brother,—WM. C. BURNS.

"*P.S.* I expect to hear from you soon. Let us be free, faithful, and affectionate, and seek to taste the excellence of *living* habitually what we *write* from time to time,—W. C. B.

"MY DEAR JANE,—I would not write you so paltry a note, were it not that writing to —— has exhausted my time, and I cannot let another opportunity pass without thanking you for your kind and interesting letter, which I have not yet acknowledged; and expressing my desire that your mid-day period of solemn retirement may be specially regarded of the Lord, and that you may obtain new and remarkable communications of the Holy Spirit in all his vivifying and comforting power. I enjoyed my late visit very much, though, had we been alone, it might have been spent in closer intercourse on the things of the Spirit, and in special approaches to the throne of divine grace, and thus have been rendered more stimulating to us all. Mr. Denniston, I hope, will see you on Friday, and I hope that, through the presence of the Lord, his parting visit may be eminently blessed to your growth in the excellent knowledge of Christ.

"I am asking, though alas! with little becoming solicitude, whether the present is to be added to the list of our almost Christless sacraments. Would that the Lord would pour out on us the Spirit as in former days, and bring his saints into close and ravishing fellowship with himself! 'Whither is our beloved gone?' 'Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' 'Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?'

"In earnest expectation of his coming, let us wait day and night, and he will at last arrive to our infinite amazement and eternal rejoicing.

"My love in Christ Jesus to dear Charlotte, and believe me, your affectionate brother,—WM. C. BURNS.

"*Wednesday 17th*, 1838.—MY DEAR JANE,—I would have sent the basket sooner, but could not find the time necessary for despatching it; and I hope that we shall get it returned not later than this day week.

"None of us have been able to get out to Paisley as yet, but I heard of them yesterday. They are all, it would seem, well, with the exception of Aunt ——, who I hear is confined to bed with cold, and is still troubled with her arm, which does not seem to mend rapidly. I paid a most delightful visit to Uncle Islay's the other evening, when Mr. ——, their new minister, was there, and expounded in a manner remarkably interesting and impressive. He seems indeed a very uncommon Christian, and has made me feel in some degree my own miserable ignorance in the excellent knowledge of the Son of God. O that I might know *Him*, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death! God forbid that we should glory save in the *Cross* of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to us, and we to the world! I trust, my dear sister, that you are obtaining some advancement in the knowledge of your own vileness and misery, and of the glorious righteousness and atonement of Emmanuel, our elder brother. Of such precious knowledge I can say little, but I would desire, I trust by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to fix the eye continually on Jesus, who is the finisher as well as the author of faith, and who will, as he is the faithful God, perfect for his own glory that which concerneth us. I am approaching, as you know, an era of my history, if we except the time of conversion, the most important that can occur to a human being in this world—soon must I offer myself, miserable as I am, to the Church of God as a candidate for the work of an evangelist; and still more, that Church must decide, so great is the honour I have in prospect, whether in this land or among the perishing heathen it shall be my lot to preach to sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ crucified. In the meantime, O pray for me, and our dear brother ——, as I now again resolve to pray for you, that, in our present respective spheres, we may be always living epistles of Christ, that may be known and read of all men, and be even now the means,

in the hand of the Spirit of the Lord, of converting sinners and edifying believers! Especially for our dear brother' —— let us plead unitedly, that he may be speedily given to the Church of God, and thus preserved safe unto the heavenly kingdom from those sins and snares of youth which have drowned so many in destruction and perdition!

"We had the privilege of being lately addressed in our missionary society by Dr. Kalley of Kilmarnock, 'a good physician,' who is leaving his present practice, which I understand is excellent, to consecrate his medical skill to the promotion of the cause of Christ in China, a channel which seems at present almost the only one open among that benighted people, so puffed up by their imagined knowledge in almost every branch of science and religion. Though a member of our own church, he goes out supported by the London Missionary Society, as the Committee of the General Assembly did not judge it expedient to extend the field of their operations farther east than India. He appears a most superior man, calm, but resolved and eager; and being one who I am informed was converted some years ago from a life of vanity, he seems, especially in prayer, to have obtained peculiarly deep views of man's sin, and of the glorious grace of God. But I am forced abruptly to conclude, and am, I trust, your affectionate brother in Christ,—WM. C. BURNS."

It was with such views, longings, and deep preparation of heart that he approached the period of his public dedication to the service of Christ in the gospel of his grace. The more secret exercises of his soul, in the immediate prospect of that event, may be still further gathered from the following jottings in a diary which he began at this time, and continued, with occasional interruptions, until the year 1853:—

"*September 19th*, 1838.—Here, if God spare my life, I intend to record from time to time the most memorable incidents

in my life and in the experience of my heart before God, my Judge. Grant me, O my covenant God and Father in Christ Jesus! that it may be, through the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit within me, a faithful copy of the truth; and that I may be enabled to look on its contents with those judgments and feelings which a sight of the unerring record of thy book of remembrance will produce within my soul in the day of the Lord Jesus. Amen. This day I had the great pleasure and profit of meeting at breakfast in his lodgings, Mr. Davidson of the Training School, Inverness, a singularly advanced and amiable Christian, whose labours have been remarkably honoured of the Lord in the island of Coll, and for the last twenty years in his present situation. I have done very little to-day, but I have seen, I trust, through the light of the Spirit, that I am especially deficient in the knowledge of the *love* of Christ, and am mournfully defective even in attempting to set this before the unconverted. Yet surely this is *the* truth, the exhibition of which is of all most fitted to beget the confidence of an appropriating faith, and to manifest the glory of the Lord's justice in visiting with a more awful damnation those who perish with Christ in their offer. O Lord! teach *thou* me to grow daily and hourly in the apprehension of thy unspeakable and sovereign love to me, a miserable sinner, that I may be constrained, out of the abundance of an overflowing heart, continually to commend thee to others who need thy love as much as I, and deserve it just as little!

"21*st*. These two days have been spent much as usual, and with nothing very remarkable, except that, which is most extraordinary because most uniform, when we notice it least, the continued and unchanging love of God in my preservation and support under an hourly increasing load of hell-kindling guilt. How needful to be daily plunged anew under the crimson tide of Emmanuel's blood, that I may walk in the light as God is in the light! I have studied Hebrew chiefly to-day, which Mr. Duncan teaches with great skill and activity.

Wm. M'D——'s and W——'s lessons take a long time at present. I saw Mr. ——'s brother, a spirit-seller in Calton, in bed; conversed and prayed with him. He seemed very ignorant of sin. May the Spirit convince him! None other can awaken truly either him or any other. The work of grace is indeed *God's* from beginning to end, and all the glory will be his. To his blessed name be praise, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

"23*d*, *Sabbath*.—This morning rose at 20 minutes to 7 and met my young men's class from 8 to 9. The attendance is increasing, and the prospect interesting. Mr. Duncan lectured in the forenoon on James ii. 12. Afternoon I addressed Mr. Patrick's little flock in St. Enoch's school, from John iii. 14, 15; and may well learn several important lessons from my experience. Last time I addressed the same meeting, a fortnight ago, I had made *mere mental* preparation, but, as I thought, was in some degree supported, and spoke with some force and fulness from Hebrews x. 19–22. Encouraged by this imagined success, I was content with a similar preparation to-day; and if the former case encouraged presumption, this does not less favour despondency. I felt little alive to the subject, my faith almost failed, and I was left devoid of conscious love to Christ and compassion for perishing souls—the affections which would have given fresh interest to the subject in my own mind, and have stimulated me to go through with its exposition and enforcement; as it was, I lost heart after discoursing for some time on our state as dying under the poison of the serpent's sting, and I stammered out some other scraps upon the remaining glorious topics of the subject, and came to an end,—concluding the whole service in an hour and a quarter, instead of the two hours of the preceding day. Oh! it is indeed an arduous thing to preach from supernatural views of divine, supernatural truths. The *Lord* must give these, or they cannot be attained. Yet notwithstanding, arduous preparation, in dependence on his power, in the closet and study, is,

I am more fully than ever convinced from to-day's experience, absolutely indispensable, at least for me, to prevent contempt being thrown upon glorious truths from circumstantials of looseness and superficiality which are easily avoided by accurate composition. My classes in the evening were fully as pleasant as usual. In explaining to my young class the first three verses of the 16th of John, and to the more advanced one the subject of divine providence from the catechism, I felt more than usually my faith realizing the truth, and in particular experienced something like freedom in discoursing of the love of Christ and the freeness of the gospel, the subjects which I think I am least of all acquainted with, but which it is most important to understand exactly, and discourse on with fulness and affection. I speak of knowing something of the love of Christ; where is that knowledge now?—now, when my soul seems to sink back into unbelief and carnal ease? Oh Holy Spirit, who dwellest in me, if indeed I am a child of God, awaken my soul, and keep thou it awake! Manifest the Lord Jesus Christ within me, and grant that his love may continually constrain me to live henceforth *no more* to myself but to Him who died for me, and rose again. Amen.

"*October 25th.* (Glasgow sacrament and fast-day.)—Since last date I have had considerable varieties of outward circumstances and of inward spiritual experience. The dealings of the Lord's providence have been uniformly prosperous, and demand the most fervent and unceasing gratitude, which, alas! I have not given, and cannot give, till I receive it of his infinite and sovereign grace. I have few remarkable discoveries by the Spirit, either of myself or of 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' but I think I have still had some advancement, displaying itself in a more staid waiting upon God, and finding the mysteries of the gospel more natural to my soul in worship, and in teaching my classes. To-day I have been in some degree waiting for the manifestations of God, but with little enlargement of spirit in prayer, either for

myself or others. At worship I was enabled to speak more fully, boldly, and sweetly for the Lord than usual; but where again is that experience now? It is gone! Alas! the fogs of unbelief and carnal affection seem to be gendered almost by the beams of divine glory coming into contact with the marshy putrid soil of corrupted nature. That which is born of the flesh is *flesh*, that alone which is born of the Spirit is spirit. I am dependent for *every acting* of gracious affection on the power of the Spirit, as well as for the first production of the new nature. How sovereign then, and uncaused by anything in me, is the ineffably gracious and blessed love of the Godhead! My classes appear (especially the young women's) to be in rather a hopeful state, but ah! where is my travailing in birth till Christ be formed in them? Grant me this, O Lord, and then bestow a blessing above all that I can ask or think, to the praise of the glory of thy grace in Jesus the beloved. Amen."

Thus was he passing more and more within the deep shadow of that great work to which he had devoted his life, and the commencement of which was now so nearly approaching. How solemnly that shadow fell upon him may be partly gathered from an incident which was related to me recently by one who of all others knew him the earliest and the best. She had gone in to Glasgow, unknown to him, on some domestic errand, and was passing through the narrow covered street called the Argyle Arcade, when she saw him turn the corner in front, and advance slowly towards her from the opposite direction as in deep reverie. Though she went up straight to him, he was quite unconscious of her presence, and started, when addressed, as from a dream. "O mother," said he with deep emotion, "I did not see you:

for when walking along Argyle Street just now, I was so overcome with the sight of the countless crowds of immortal beings eagerly hasting hither and thither, but all posting onwards towards the eternal world, that I could bear it no longer, and turned in here to seek relief in quiet thought." The great deep had been stirred up once more, but by a mightier and more sacred impulse than in former days.

He was licensed to preach the gospel by the presbytery of Glasgow on the 27th day of March, 1839.

CHAPTER III.

1839.

OPENING MINISTRY.

IN the report of the University Missionary Association for the year 1838, the seventeenth from its institution, I find the following interesting notice:—"Gratifying as the preceding facts must be regarded, it is with deeper gratitude and far higher pleasure that your committee intimate the fact that *two* of their own number, the one for two, and the other for four years a member of this society, have during the present session publicly offered themselves to the church of Christ as missionaries to the heathen, and have been accepted. This society has numbered among its members not a few who were devoted to the same high calling, and it is perhaps probable that it has contributed in other cases to foster convictions which afterwards led to a similar dedication; but in the present instance it has formed the principal, if not the only special, instrument which the Lord of the vineyard has employed in calling his professed disciples to engage in this—the noblest department of his service upon earth."

Of the two here mentioned the subject of this memoir was one, the other being, I think, a member of one of the

nonconformist communions in England, then resident at the University, as a scholar on the Williams' foundation. To his own case my brother makes brief but pregnant reference nine years afterwards in a retrospective notice in his diary, while at sea on his way to China: "At Glasgow University, during the winter 1837–8, I was led, from my connection with the College Missionary Association, to feel so deeply my personal responsibility in regard to the spread of the gospel among the heathen, that after much prayer and many solemn exercises of soul, I took the solemn step of writing to my father, to request that, if he thought good, he should communicate with Dr. Gordon, the convener of our India committee, and let him know that, should the Church deem me qualified, I would be ready to go as a missionary to Hindustan. He did this, and the committee having given me encouragement in the matter, I looked upon myself as publicly devoted to the missionary field. In my own soul, and in all my public duties connected with missionary meetings, &c. &c., I felt from that time forward a greatly enlarged measure of the presence and blessing of God, tending to confirm me more deeply in my cherished hope and purpose. This was the last session which I needed to spend at College to complete my curriculum; but, partly because I found myself profitably engaged in study, and still more, I believe, because I waited in expectation of a call to the missionary field, I remained at College during the following winter, and in the spring of 1839 a proposal was made by the colonial committee that I should go out for a season to fill a charge at St. John's, New Brunswick, and proceed

direct from America to India when the India committee should require me. It was expected that the India committee would accede to this proposal, but they refused, wishing that their agents should be free to go when wanted, and so the matter ended. This was at the very time when Mr. M'Cheyne, about to set out for Palestine, wrote, asking me to take his place at Dundee. I found myself unexpectedly free to do this, and being speedily licensed I entered on my duties in that memorable field. This was at the beginning of April. In the month of June or July I received the call that I had long looked for, being asked by the India committee to go to Poonah in the presidency of Bombay. My engagement at Dundee stood in the way of my at once complying, and another call which the Jewish committee gave me to go to Aden in Arabia increased the difficulty. While asking guidance in regard to my duty I went to the communion at Kilsyth in July, when the Lord began to employ me in a way so remarkable for the awakening of sinners, that in returning to Dundee, and finding myself in the midst of a great spiritual awakening, I was obliged to make known to both committees that, while my views regarding missionary work remained unchanged, yet I found that I must for the time remain where I was, and fulfil the work which God was laying upon me with a mighty hand."

In giving this extract I have somewhat anticipated the course of events in that part of the narrative on which we are now entering; but it was necessary to do so, in order to present in a clear light the relation in which my brother at this time, and for several years thereafter,

stood towards that great work to which he had solemnly, and as he deemed irrevocably, dedicated himself. He had given himself deliberately, and in some sense publicly, before God and His church, to the service of Christ in the field of heathen missions, and he believed the offering had been accepted. Having thus lifted up his hand unto the Lord, he felt the vows of the great Master upon him ever after, and he never drew back or dreamed of drawing back. Their performance was deferred only, not relinquished, and deferred not by himself, but by Him to whom they had been made, and at whose disposal he had wholly and unreservedly placed himself. And so, when nine years afterwards the long-expected summons suddenly came to him, it found him with the unchanged purpose still fresh upon his soul, and ready to march at a moment's warning at the great Captain's bidding. Meanwhile the field immediately before him was white unto the harvest, and he was thrust forth into the midst of it by a high and mighty hand. A great work was laid upon him which could neither be evaded nor postponed, and he had no choice but to give himself wholly to it, and to do it with his might. The door opened to him was wide and effectual, beyond probably what he had ever dreamed. He had indeed, as I distinctly remember, very exalted views of what might be expected even in these latter days from the outpouring of the Spirit, in answer to the earnest prayers of a reviving Church. His mind had dwelt much, in common with many others about that time, on the divine promises to that effect, and on the grand typical fulfilment of them on the day of

Pentecost. That memorable scene he regarded not as an isolated event, but as a pattern of what the Church might hope in any age to see, it might be even still more gloriously. Even some of the most startling outward manifestations of the Spirit's working then displayed he regarded not as exceptional circumstances, but as what might be repeated any day before our eyes. The cloven tongues, and the gift of many languages, had indeed passed away, with the age of miracle to which they essentially belonged; but the cries of stricken consciences and the loud sobs of broken hearts belonged not to that age, but to every age, and would, he believed, be heard more or less wherever in a congregated multitude of sinful men the arrows of the mighty King are sharp in the hearts of his enemies. I remember having a discussion with him on this very subject in the course of a quiet walk from Glasgow towards our home at Kilsyth, shortly before he commenced his work in Dundee. I ventured to question whether, even though the working of the divine Spirit in the bosom of a Christian congregation were as powerful and profound as in pentecostal times, the habitual reserve and self-restraint of modern life, especially amongst the more educated classes, would not prevent such unrestrained expression of inward feelings, as that there displayed. To this view he demurred, deeming that if the mighty rushing wind, which bloweth where it listeth, should indeed come with power, we should hear the sound thereof, so that even the world itself should not be able wholly to close its ears. Little did I think that within a month or two of that time,

and in the parish church of that very place to which we were then bending our steps, I should myself witness what seemed so remarkable a verification of his words. Probably he himself, even while arguing the possibility of such a thing, little dreamed that it was in truth so near at hand.

He entered on his labours at Dundee on the first or second Sabbath of April, taking as his text Romans xii. 1, —the same words on which he had preached his first sermon in his father's pulpit at Kilsyth a short time before, and which were in truth prophetic of the whole spirit and character of his future life and ministry. The work he now undertook was indeed an arduous, and to one so young and inexperienced, a peculiarly trying one. Robert Murray M'Cheyne, whose name has since become a household word throughout the universal Church, was already widely known throughout Scotland as one of the most gifted, holy, and successful ministers of recent times; and it was no light or easy thing for any one to enter, even for a season, into his labours. An overflowing congregation, of every class and degree in life, drawn together, many of them, from considerable distances in the town and country round, accustomed to the charm of a peculiar ministry which would be apt to render any ordinary teaching tame and common-place, and above all, throbbing throughout with a high tone of spiritual excitement which it was difficult to meet and to sustain, presented altogether a sphere of labour from which the young evangelist, profoundly conscious of his own insufficiency, might well recoil. But it was, in truth, that very consciousness of

insufficiency, and consequent utter abnegation of all trust in himself, that made him strong. Feeling in the depths of his soul that without Christ he could do nothing, but that through his grace strengthening him he could do all things, there did not, after all, seem to him so much difference in point of mere difficulty between one duty and another. Without the immediate presence and help of his divine Master he could not speak even to a handful of little children in a Sunday-school; with that presence and help he could stand unabashed before the mightiest and the wisest in the world. It will be seen from constant entries in his journal how perpetually present was this thought to his mind, and how it formed the master principle of his whole life and ministry; and it seems to me to have been so in a very remarkable degree from the beginning. And hence, no doubt, it was that on the very first day of his ministering before that great congregation, and when many anxious eyes were turned on the youthful face and form of one who seemed to them all too weak for such a burden, he appeared conspicuously calm and self-possessed, as one visibly standing in the shadow of the Almighty, and consciously speaking the words that were given him of the Lord. I have heard old members of the congregation tell how their hearts trembled for him, when they saw what seemed to them a mere stripling standing up in the place of one whom they so revered and honoured, and how almost at the first sound of his voice, as he led with such deep-toned spirituality and power the prayers of the sanctuary, their fears vanished, and they seemed to hear only the sound of his

Master's feet behind him. Accordingly he seems from the first to have taken a singularly fast hold of the congregation, and to have filled to a degree which one would scarcely have thought possible, alike in authority and spiritual power, the place of their absent pastor. Young, inexperienced, measured and slow of speech, gifted with no peculiar charm of poetry or sentiment or natural eloquence or winning sweetness, he bore so manifestly the visible seals of a divine commission, and carried about him withal such an awe of the divine presence and majesty, as to disarm criticism and constrain even careless hearts to receive him as the messenger of God. If his words were sometimes few, naked, unadorned, they were full of weight and power, and went home, as arrows directed by a sure aim, to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. Literally it might be said of him, that his speech and his preaching were not with excellency of speech and man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The result accordingly was soon seen in a visible increase of spiritual inquiry amongst the people, and a generally heightened tone of solemnity and earnestness in the congregation at large. In the words of an esteemed member and office-bearer of the congregation, who has been able to recal with singular distinctness the scenes of those days:—"Scarcely had Mr. Burns entered on his work in St. Peter's here, when his power as a preacher began to be felt. Gifted with a solid and vigorous understanding, possessed of a voice of vast compass and power—unsurpassed even by that of Mr. Spurgeon—and withal fired with an ardour so

intense and an energy so exhaustless that nothing could damp or resist it, Mr. Burns wielded an influence over the masses whom he addressed which was almost without parallel since the days of Wesley and Whitfield. Crowds flocked to St. Peter's from all the country round; and the strength of the preacher seemed to grow with the incessant demands made upon it. Wherever Mr. Burns preached a deep impression was produced on his audience, and it was felt to be impossible to remain unconcerned under the impassioned earnestness of his appeals. With him there was no effort at oratorical display, but there was true eloquence; and instances are on record of persons, strong in their self-confidence and enmity to the truth, who fell before its power—who,

> "'Though they came to scoff,
> Remained to pray.'"

As already hinted, nothing could be more different than the whole style and character of his mind, from that of him whose place he yet so worthily filled. Of the rich aroma of sanctified poetry and pathos which imparted their distinctive charm to the life and writings of M'Cheyne, he had none. His characteristic was strength, not beauty, clearness and force, rather than freshness and fulness of thought and diction; and it was not even, except when he was profoundly stirred by strong spiritual influences, that one became conscious of the deep fountain of enthusiasm and of intense emotion that was within him. In the words of Mr. Moody Stuart, who intimately knew him from the very first days of his spiritual life, and who seems to me to have formed a singularly just estimate of his character

and gifts, "the hard plodding for a great object, the sagacious intellect, the quick linguistic apprehension, common sense, mother wit, coolness and presence of mind in every variety of circumstance, were more his natural characteristics, than the elements which go to constitute the enthusiastic and exciting preacher. In the midst of the revival at Kilsyth he would sometimes relieve the tension of his mind by reading the Greek classics; and he possessed the bodily strength, the courage, and all the other qualities that would have enabled him to cross the continent of Africa, like Dr. Livingstone, if he had set his heart on such an object. No man was less a fool by nature, yet no man in modern times did more entirely become a fool for Christ's sake. His preaching was in a most peculiar manner by the power of the Holy Ghost, 'in demonstration of the Spirit and in power,' and 'mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.' He had no pathos, no fancy, little natural enthusiasm, and not much that could be called natural eloquence, but he had a firm grasp of gospel truth, a capacity for clear and forcible statement, and a voice capable of commanding any audience, however large, in the church, in the street, in the field; and when the power of the Spirit rested upon him, there were the thunders of Sinai in all their terrors, the still small voice of the gospel in much of its tenderness, the fervent fluency of a tongue touched with a live coal from the altar, the irrepressible urgency of one standing between the living and the dead, the earnest pressing of salvation that would accept no refusal; himself standing consciously and evidently in the presence of the great

God, with heaven and hell and the souls of men open before him, with Jesus Christ filling his heart with his love, and pouring grace into his lips, and with multitudes before him weeping for sorrow over discovered sin, or for joy in a discovered Saviour."

His first impressions of the place and of his work will be partly gathered from the following letter to a sister:—

"*Dundee, Seafield Cottage, April 10th*, 1839. . . . I would gladly fill my sheet in narrating what I have been able to ascertain of my situation and circumstances here, were it not that I must husband every moment of my time for my engagements in visiting the sick and dying, examining intending communicants, and preparation for the Sabbath that is approaching. I am not left without many circumstances to encourage me in my arduous labours; not a few hearts seem in a good measure prepared to hear the gospel as the Word of God, and some I have met with whose experience in the spiritual life affords the strongest stimulus to my own growth in grace, and whose ideas of Christian ministrations will, I fear, make me to appear among them as an ignorant babbler. They appear, however, a very kind and not uncharitable class of people, as far as I can discover; they will, I hope, pray for as well as censure me; and as I have had a clear call from the Lord, without my own interference, to come among them, I desire to cast all my burden upon his blessed shoulders, and to wait with earnest wrestlings until he appear among us in his glory to build up Zion. Let us go on to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God."

In another letter, dated about two months after (June 18), addressed to a deeply revered aunt at St. Andrews, he declines an invitation to preach there on a Sabbath, on the ground that "the people are in that interesting

state of hopeful movement and inquiry, in which it is least of all the duty of their appointed teacher to be absent from them;" and then proceeds in that intense strain of ardent aspiration which had already become characteristic of him, and which seems almost prophetic of what was so soon to come:—

"It is my earnest desire and prayer, dear aunt, that the Lord may look down in his infinite mercy and grace on St. Andrews, which in ancient times he so highly honoured, but from which, alas! is not his glorious presence greatly withdrawn? Oh! for a Rutherford or a Halyburton to awaken slumbering sinners at ease under the wrath of an angry God, and to stir up the true people of God to abound in the love and in the praise of Jesus! 'Wilt Thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in Thee.' Oh! may the Lord grant to that remnant that serve him in the Spirit to be 'zealous, and strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die,' to plead, yea, to besiege the throne of grace with their unceasing and importunate pleadings, that He may appear in *his* glory, and build up Zion, giving ear to the prayer of the destitute and the groaning of the prisoners. Oh! what a plea is the name of Jesus! how omnipotent to move the heart of the Father, who loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands! None of God's people have yet proved the power of that matchless name in the presence of Jehovah. Let us henceforth do so in the strength of Jesus, and we may yet see before we leave the kingdom of grace for the kingdom of glory, such a plenteous rain as will refresh God's heritage which is weary. The time is short! Behold! the Judge *standeth* before the door. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

It is at this point that the detailed journals of his life and labours, which he began in September, 1838, become for the first time fully available. These will form

the main substance of our narrative during the whole period which they cover, supplemented only here and there by such illustrative light as the recollections of others or any surviving fragments of correspondence may throw upon them. They will, I am sure, be far more acceptable to all really interested in his work, than anything, however highly and even truthfully coloured, which could possibly proceed from any other hand. To any one in the slightest degree acquainted with the character of the writer, and who knows how jealously guarded and almost, as one might say, penurious he was of his words in anything relating to himself or his work these simple but pregnant annals, written as in the presence and under the very eye of God, will have an impressiveness and a meaning beyond the reach of eloquence. At first they are occasionally somewhat broken and fragmentary, but they increase in fulness and freedom as they proceed, and in parts, albeit naked and unadorned as ever, have all the vividness and force of a record written in the field, and amid the thick of battle. The following extracts relating to the same period to which the letters just quoted belong, will still further illustrate the nature of his work, and the inner workings of his soul in connection with it, during the first months of his ministry in Dundee, as well as form a fitting introduction to the more stirring scenes which will form the subject of the next chapter:—

"*April* 17, 1839.—Met with two young communicants, M. W—— and E. W——, by appointment at twelve o'clock. Prayed with them, and conversed with each separately. They both appear hopeful converts to the

Lord Jesus. M. W—— doubts the evidence of her faith from want of love to Christ, hardness of heart, &c., and was exhorted to come to Christ for these and all other fruits of the Spirit. E. W—— appeared to think she was a true believer, and gave an interesting account of her supposed conversion under Mr. M'Cheyne's ministry; she is very intelligent, well acquainted with Scripture, and really appears to have known something of genuine spiritual exercise. I prayed with them at parting, and bade them farewell with mixed feelings of joy at the tokens of God's work which I thought I saw, and sorrow that I should feel so little in dealing with cases so interesting and encouraging. O Lord, keep these dear young disciples from the devil, the world, and the flesh; perfect thy love in their hearts, thine image in their souls, and grant to me in thine infinite grace to experience more pure and tender love for the lambs of the flock. This I ask in the name of my Lord Jesus. Amen.

"*Fast-day*, 18*th*.—In coming from the evening discourse I was met by the father of James Wallace, Paton's Lane, a boy of twelve, whom I had previously called to see, and found, on my entrance, to my astonishment and delight, such a specimen (if all signs do not deceive me) of the work of the Holy Spirit as I have I think never before witnessed on a sick-bed, except in the case of ——, Rothesay. James was lying placidly on his couch, pale and sickly, but his eye beaming with intelligence and inexpressible joy. He told me at once that he had been afflicted for his profit. I asked him what he needed from Christ. He said, 'Redemption.' Q. Tell me some of the

particular things you need. A. A new heart and right spirit, deliverance from temptations, the world, and the devil. Q. Can Christ give you these great things? A. Yes. Q. Why can he do so? A. He is the Saviour of sinners. I then led him back to the pre-existent state of Christ as the eternal Son of God, and then—Q. What did he become? A. A man. Q. What did he do? A. He suffered persecution, he sweated great drops of blood, he was nailed to the Cross that he might redeem sinners. This I said was wondrous love. A. Yes. Q. Do you love Christ? A. Yes. Q. Why? A. Because he loved me. Q. When did you get these views of Christ? A. Since I lay down here. Q. Who has taught you? A. The Holy Spirit. Q. Did you seek him first, or did he seek you? A. He sought me; 'I am found of them that sought me not.' Q. Can you ever praise Christ enough? A. No. Q. Would you like to sing his praise in heaven? A. Yes, for ever. I said, There is a song which they sing in heaven: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory;' and they say also, 'Worthy is the Lamb.' A. Yes; that's the four beasts. Q. What do you chiefly desire; is it to get better? A. No; to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Q. What would you wish for all those about you? A. That they should know Christ, and love Christ, for he teaches us to desire that all should know him. Q. Do you pray much? A. Yes; he commands us to pray always. Q. Can we pray ourselves? A. No; the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities, with groanings which cannot be uttered. Q. Would you like us to pray? A. Yes, very much.

When we had done, I said I would come soon again. He said, 'Yes; He has promised that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he will be in the midst of them to bless them and do them good.' These are a few of the precious and spiritual sayings of this dearly beloved boy, not in the order in which they were uttered, for that I cannot recall. He also said of himself, that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God gets perfect praise. He said he had heard Mr. M'Cheyne with great pleasure; and that his father had one day told him something that he had said, 'When water is spilt upon the ground, it cannot be gathered up again, and yet the sun gathers it up; and so Christ draws sinners to himself when they are lost.' I came away with mingled feelings of astonishment at the work of the Spirit, and desires for gratitude to him for his wondrous love in calling *me* to behold his marvellous works. . . . . I went from this to Mr. M'Cheyne's, and spent a few minutes with Mr. Moody, who goes off to-morrow at 7. Came home tired; had worship, and went to bed at eleven. Unspeakable mercies, unspeakable unfruitfulness and ingratitude. The glory will be all the Lord's, for the mercy and the grace are his. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not *all* his benefits.' Amen.

"19*th*.—Rose at eight, breakfast at Mr. Thoms'; Mr. and Mrs. Parker from Aberdeen, &c., present. Copied the first of Mr. M'Cheyne's pastoral letters; into town; walked home with Mr. Neilson; studied treatise on *Rejoicing in Christ*. Visited two poor sick people—no decided indication of spiritual life; met communicants at seven—

spoke to them on the nature of the Lord's Supper from the questions on that subject in the Shorter Catechism—had some freedom and a little degree of light on the glory of Christ's love in his obedience and sufferings—concluded at nine, and found a dear brother in Christ waiting me, Mr. M'Donald, of Blairgowrie—walked with him to Mr. Thain's, and entered into a proposal that I should exchange pulpits with him before the Assembly, and preach on missions. Came home and prepared for bed at a quarter past eleven.

"*20th.* . . . . Public worship at two. Mr. C——, Bridge of E——, discoursed on Acts vii. 54 to the end,—the martyrdom of Stephen. A very interesting style of lecturing; a spiritual man, and much fitted to edify; admirable prayers with great variety. Met afterwards with young communicants to serve them with tokens. Dinner at Mr. M'Cheyne's; present, Mr. Cumming and Mr. Grierson of Errol; instructive conversation on Popery and the signs of the times. Met at half-past six P. B. and R. N., young communicants; conversed with them separately till 8. P. I found better informed than I expected, and I think rather serious. R. N. was very ignorant of himself, and sour when taken cross-ways; was found to think that he loved God, and might be saved by works; tried to show him his state and the necessity of conversion. Gave P. B a token, and sent R. N. home to his closet, to meet me at a quarter past ten to-morrow, and see if he then wants a token. Oh! what need of the powerful presence of the Holy Ghost, without whom a free Saviour will, and must be, a Saviour despised and rejected of men.

How hard it is to unite in just proportions the humbling doctrine of man's inability to come to Christ without regeneration, and the free gospel offer which is the moral means employed by God in conversion! Oh! Spirit of Jesus, my Saviour, lead me, a poor, ignorant, and self-conceited sinner, to the experience of this great mystery of grace, that I may know how I ought to declare thy glorious gospel to perishing fellow-sinners! Amen.

"*April 23d* (Communion Sabbath).—On Sabbath Mr. Sommerville officiated; action sermon from Ephesians i. 6, 7. Mr. Cumming preached in the evening, but I was absent, having been called to preach for Mr. Baxter, Hiltown, instead of Mr. M'Donald, of Blairgowrie, whose brother died at Perth on Saturday morning. I heard Mr. Baxter's address, excellent and solemn; went home with him, and spent the interval chiefly in prayer, and was more than usually helped in public duty. I went home again with Mr. Baxter, had tea and edifying converse; joined with him in prayer, and departed at half-past nine.

"*Monday.* . . . . Warned by Mrs. P—— against the danger to which young ministers are exposed; home to my studies at a quarter past eight; got some humiliation, or rather some discovery of pride in prayer. The Lord is indeed infinite in mercy when he bears with me; to his name shall be the praise.

"*24th.* . . . . Home at a quarter past eight; studies till a quarter past ten, interesting and profitable, especially reading from Fleming's remarkable and precious *Fulfilling of the Scripture* regarding the strength afforded to God's saints under trials and for difficult duties. Praise the

Lord. But O for a revival of that experimental deep-laid religion which Fleming valued and exemplifies so fully in his pages! 'Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord! awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.'

"*Evening of 25th.* . . . . Discoursed on 1 Cor. i. 26 to the end, not much freedom, but a measure of faith in the truth; then read No. 3 of the Revival Tracts about Baldernock. Discovered through grace, an awful hungering after applause from man, and came home fearing that God may utterly forsake me in consequence of my self-seeking in his service; this He would have done long ago had not his love been free and unchanging in Christ Jesus. O for a spirit of humble wrestling prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that sinners may be awakened, and saints greatly edified and advanced! I wrote something more, had worship, and am now about going to rest. The Lord give me a song in the night to his glorious praise!

"*29th.* I have found no time these past few days to keep a note of memorabilia, and must now shortly review the facts that have occurred in the interval. I have been rising regularly a little after six except to-day, when I lay till eight. On Friday and Saturday I wrote and committed my discourses on Psalms xxiii.; lxxi. 16. Considerably assisted in preparing. On Sabbath had great calmness and composure, but I think a great want of holy thirstings after God. I had, however, more than usual liberty in prayer and preaching, especially in the afternoon. O that Christ were exalted and man forgotten among this people! Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain that they may live. . . .

"*April 30th.*—Called on M—— L——, in distress since the time of the cholera—reading Rutherford's *Letters*—seemed a really experienced child of God—said many striking things: *e.g.* 'The ways of God are strange; we maun just wait to see what airt he taks.' She said among other things, 'Ministers shudna use big words, they micht as weel speak Erse[1] or Latin; it's weel we dinna need sic big words at a throne o' grace.' . . . .

"*May 1st.* . . . . Studied during all the day my sermon on Matthew xi. 28. James Hamilton called. . . . . At six at tea, Mr. N——, Mr. C——, Mr. C——, Mr. J——, Mr. M——, to consult about Sabbath-schools and the formation of a parochial missionary society. Mr. T—— came in accidentally at eight and remained till ten, when we separated with prayer—a pleasant meeting; but I had an affecting disclosure to myself of the pride and vanity of my heart, which praise of late has awfully stirred up; none but an omnipotent and infinitely gracious Saviour will suit my case. Blessed be the Lord, Jesus is such as I need, and he has said to me, 'Come, ye *labouring* and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' I want rest from the dominion of sin. O that I wished it with an eye to the glory of God; this also I look to Jesus for. 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.' No man can come to Christ except the Father draw him. Draw me, O Father! effectually to the praise of thy glory in Christ Jesus. Amen.

"*May 2d.* . . . . Studied during the day Matthew

[1] *i.e.* Gaelic.

xi. 28, and read over several of the Revival Tracts. In prayer for the evening sadly dead and dark. I have not seen the King's face these many days. Visited James Wallace at six, and found him rejoicing and advancing in knowledge as well as experience. He said he was ten days nearer death than when I last saw him, and this with joy. I asked him if he was not sorry. A. No; to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. He said he had found out many wonderful passages, and when I got his Bible it was all folded down at the most striking texts. He alluded to a number of them:—'All our righteousness is as,' &c. Isaiah xii. he said was sweet. I consulted him upon the meaning of many experimental passages, among others my present text, Matthew xi. 28, and found great light from his Spirit-taught knowledge. Who teacheth like God? His work is perfect. Met at half-past six with the tract-distributors in the vestry; said a few words and prayed. At the prayer-meeting I read, and shortly spoke on Isaiah liii., and then read parts of No. 3 of Revival Tracts—was helped considerably—many anecdotes brought to mind—great attention. 'Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord! awake, as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old!' Glorify Christ, O Holy Spirit! in our hearts and throughout the whole world. Amen.

"*7th.*—Had a letter on Friday—sweet and comforting—from R. M'Donald, Blairgowrie; wrote him in answer. Sabbath forenoon I was ill prepared, and was not sensibly so much assisted as on former occasions—felt regret, but alas! chiefly, I fear, from a regard to my name as a preacher, not to Christ's as a Saviour. In the afternoon exchanged

with Mr. Roxburgh, and was more than usually supported to declare the truth. . . . Yesterday spent the morning in prayer. Walked, and read Boston's life—A precious monument to the praise of grace—noble standard of ministerial character! . . . . Dined at——; I felt not at home in the atmosphere of this world's carnal *security*, which is so generally breathed at dinner-parties. Off at six to a meeting in the vestry on church extension—class at seven—the school-room *quite* full—very interesting opportunity—subject, John i. 1–14, along with Genesis i.—Christ's supreme Godhead; how glorious the doctrine—how conclusive the evidence! The Lord was with me more than usually.

"*8th.* . . . On Friday I went to Blairgowrie—spent the remainder of the day and the morning of Saturday most pleasantly and profitably with my dearly beloved brother R. M'Donald, and also his fellow-labourer Mr. Smith—we had two seasons of special prayer. Mr. M'D—— having left me on Saturday for town (Dundee) after we had dined together at Mr. T——'s, I remained there over Sabbath. . . . . Mrs. T—— is, I think, a truly pious woman, and both she and Mr. T—— with all the family are most kind and interesting. Dear A—— was taken ill of scarlet fever on Saturday, and this excited us all a good deal. On Sabbath night he was very anxious to see me regarding the state of his soul; however, we were afraid to increase the fever, and I only stood at his bedside and repeated a few of the invitations to come to Christ for all. I was brought by this event nearer to eternity, and felt more of the reality and awfulness of

perdition than I remember ever having before. O that the Lord would sustain me in a constant and prevailing sense of the fearful guilt and danger of sinners remaining at a distance from Christ, and his free and offered gift to perishing sinners. On Sabbath I preached thrice—twice in the church on Matthew xi. 25, 26, and in the evening in Mr. Smith's chapel from Psalm lxxi. 16. After coming out in the evening I went up to Mr. M'Donald's Sabbath-school, in the church, and spoke a little before concluding with prayer. This is a most engaging assembly of young people, and I have reason to think, from what I saw, that God is doing some gracious work among them. Yesterday (Monday) . . . . the class in the evening was full to the door—subject, Mr. M'Donald's forenoon sermon, "They glorified God in me;" very interesting. . . . . .

"21*st*.—I composed and committed two discourses on Matthew xi. 27, first clause, and was more than ever supported in the pulpit, especially in the afternoon, when I was enabled to plead with sinners to submit to the King of Zion. In the evening I visited J. W——, where I met K. B——, the woman who sits in the pulpit stair. She said all head-learning could not enable a man to feed the lambs; there must be first repentance, as in the case of Peter. She exhorted me with spiritual earnestness to watch for individual souls, saying, 'You may lose a jewel from your crown; though you do not lose your crown, you may lose a jewel from it.' She appeared to recognize the work of God in my soul, and spoke with great pleasure of the discourses of that day. Praise all to God! I am vile,

vile, vile. . . . . O that the Lord would give me the skill of a Brainerd or a Dickson, for my present difficult and most precious duties! 'Establish the work of our hands; yea, the work of our hands do thou establish it.' How various are God's ways of dealing with the soul; how much does he display his sovereign hand in bringing souls under conviction and into the peace of believing. One of the class came upon Monday night when we were dismissing, and asked if I could tell her anything she could do for Christ. O what a precious question, when put in the spirit of Paul—What wilt thou have me to do? Among other things I told her to be sure to ask the Lord himself, and to leave the matter in his hands."

On hearing of one awakened under his sermon on Psalm lxxi. 16, he writes: "O marvellous grace, that the Lord should regard *at all* my carnal, self-seeking ministry; to him be the glory *eternally!* . . . . Lord Jesus, the good Shepherd, lead this wandering sheep to thy fold; even now do thou fan into a flame by the quickening breath of thy Spirit that smoking flax which thou hast touched with the heavenly fire of thy matchless grace, and give me grace—the grace of the indwelling Spirit to fit me for feeding the lambs and tending the sheep. Thy blood and obedience freely offered to sinners of the deepest dye, are all my pleas with the Father. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and cause many to say with hearts smitten with the rod of thy strength, 'We would see Jesus.' Amen. . . . . On Sabbath I preached in the forenoon from Matthew xviii. 2, 'Except ye be

converted,' &c.; and in the evening from Psalm cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,' when a collection of £8, 10*s.* 6*d.* was made to assist in establishing a parochial library. I was more than usually assisted of the Lord all day. O how much I would wonder and adore his long-suffering and grace in bearing with me, and in still *preventing* me with his tender mercies. It is all to the praise of the glory of his grace. 'Not for your sake do I this.' Truth, Lord. 'The *wages* of sin is *death*, but *eternal life* is the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' On Monday Mrs. T——, Mrs. L——, and M. L—— called and presented me with a Bible, Eusebius' *History*, and Dr. Duff's *Missions the Chief End of the Christian Church*, from my female class. I returned thanks with them on my knees. I am vile, vile, vile, and feel myself most so when thanked for serving him. May He return their kindness in enabling me to give them back with 'demonstration of the Spirit and power,' the word contained in the blessed volume they have given me. It is Bagster's English Polyglot, with index and concordance, and is finely bound in morocco.

". . . . I had a sweet note the other day from W. U——, in which he asks me, 'How is it with your soul? Is the glory of God ever in your view? Do you desire above all things to glorify him upon earth? Is this the grand centre-point in all your wishes?' Thanks to God for these questions thus faithfully put by his dear young servant.

"*June 6th.*— . . . . . A. M—— came with joy to tell me that she had found her own case all opened up the last two Sabbaths, and that she now found herself as

under Mr. M'Cheyne's ministry. I told her not to cast sparks from hell into my inflammable heart—to give thanks to God, and to beware of commending man. On Monday I had a visit from an interesting old woman, Jean D——, who in her youth was a parishioner of my father's at Dun, while servant with Mr. M——, Somershill, and whose mother, Jean M——, lived at Arat's Mill, and was often visited by my father in her last illness. She told me many interesting facts, among others the following:—While a servant with Mr. M——, my father came round and catechised her, and she told me the questions he put, and the kind manner he spoke to her. She requested to be allowed to attend his Sabbath-class; he objected that she was too old; but she was so anxious, that though twenty-five, she was admitted. Her parents were both godly people, who prayed much, and on the Sabbath afternoons they used to sit in the summer time upon a green, and go over all that had been said. She said *then* more would have been got over at such a time than *now* was learned in a year, when people left almost all behind them at the church. Her father, when he could not through sickness rise to pray with them, knelt and prayed in his bed. She had a brother who went to Brechin to learn a trade, and went astray; but was hurt, became ill, and then came home and was brought under convictions of sin. He had very dark and despairing views of himself for a long time, and would often cry like a child. One day he had been a good while out of sight, and her mother said to Jean, 'Where is your brother?' He soon after appeared, rising from the green where he had been, as she thought, at prayer,

and came into the house with a smiling countenance. They were amazed, and asked the reason; he said, 'O mother, I see that there is more merit in the blood of Jesus than there is guilt in my sins, and why should I fear?' This brought tears of joy into all their eyes. He afterwards died in great peace, the peace of God in believing the gospel. This woman told me many interesting facts regarding Mr. Coutts and our uncle at Brechin—what were their texts, particularly at communion seasons, and many things that they said. Regarding her later history also, since she came to this neighbourhood, she gave me a full account, in many respects remarkable. One of her sons now comes regularly to St. Peter's, from Longforgan, a distance of five miles. The origin of this is very remarkable. One day in winter, he and another man were working in a quarry, and happened to be beside a fire, when a person came up on a pony, and, for what reason they did not know, came off, and went up to them. He entered into conversation on the state of their souls, drawing some alarming truths from the blazing fire. The men were surprised, and said, 'Ye're nae common man.' 'Oh yes,' says he, 'just a common man.' One of the men, however, recognized him as Mr. M'Cheyne, and they were so much impressed that Jean D——'s son resolved, as soon as the weather would allow, to come in to hear him. The consequence has been, that he has continued to come regularly. She hopes that he is really a converted man, and told me that he has been for some time a member of a prayer-meeting. What a striking lesson to be 'instant in season and out of season.'

"*July 2d.*—My manifold engagements have prevented me from recording the multiplied and wonderful doings of God towards me in this book which have occurred during the past month. I can now only note a few. I went to Edinburgh on the 8th of June, at Mr. Moody's request, and preached for him on Sabbath afternoon, from Matthew xviii. 2, 'Except ye be converted,' &c. On the Saturday I saw Mr. Candlish and other friends relative to the mission to Aden. That day the Lord directed me most marvellously to meet with several remarkable saints whom I had not before seen. . . . . On my way home I called on Mr. M'Cheyne, and finding that they were dividing a sheet among them, and sending a letter to Constantinople for Mr. R. M. M'Cheyne, I was kindly allowed to occupy part of the remaining space. This was a wonderful day to my soul,—a day fitted to humble me very low before Him under whose teaching I have so little profited in comparison of many others, and to exalt in my eyes more than ever the riches and sovereignty of the grace of a redeeming God. Since I came home, three Sabbaths have elapsed. On the first (June 16), I preached all day from Matthew xi. 28. Owing to my many engagements I had nothing written but a few sentences of the forenoon sermon; but, thanks be to Jesus, on whose strength I was enabled in some degree to rely, I never, perhaps, preached with greater liberty and power. Next Sabbath (23d) I was upon the following two verses. In the forenoon I was considerably deserted of God, and was much weighed down in the interval owing to my having nothing written for the after-

noon, and my fears that God was about to make me ashamed before the congregation that I might thenceforward prepare more carefully. I cried to the Lord in my distress, and he heard me, and in the afternoon, as soon as I began to speak upon these words, "I will give rest to your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light," I felt most sensibly the quickening breath of the Holy Ghost upon my soul, and was enabled to preach in a way more affectionate, full, and earnest, than almost ever before. I resolved, however, in future to prepare more carefully *if possible.* Last Sabbath (30th) I began in the forenoon to lecture through the Colossians, taking the inscription and salutation as the first subject, and in the afternoon I commenced a series of discourses on Psalm cxxx., taking the help of the great Owen. I was much supported all day, and had nearer views of the holiness of Jehovah than ever before in the pulpit. There are some favourable symptoms of the presence of God among the flock. Two prayer-meetings have begun among the young women, those among the older people are becoming larger and more lively." . . . .

Already had the fond anticipation of the absent pastor in behalf of his youthful assistant begun to be realized: "You are given," he had said, "in answer to prayer, and these gifts are, I believe, always, without exception, blessed." Thus far he had proved faithful in keeping the vineyard of another; but he was now on the eve of being called to enter on a field and line of service peculiarly his own.

CHAPTER IV.

1839.

REVIVAL SCENES.

THE subject of the revival of religion as the great want of the times had been already, and for a long time, much in the minds both of the pastor and the people of Kilsyth. The memorable scenes of the years 1742–3, when, under the ministry of the Rev. James Robe, this parish shared with that of Cambuslang in so remarkable an effusion of the Spirit of grace, still lived as a cherished tradition in the hearts of the people, and there were still here and there little companies of praying souls, "who spake one to another" of the good days of the past, and who "sighed and cried" over the subsequent times of declension and backsliding. There was, I believe, at least one society for religious fellowship which had survived, in the uninterrupted succession of its members, all through the intervening period, and whose lamp of faith and prayer was still found faintly burning, when the light of a new morning broke upon them, and the whole parish seemed to awake as "from a dream of a hundred years." Into those sacred reminiscences and aspirations my father entered most profoundly from the first day of his ministry here in

1821, and laboured unceasingly thenceforward to keep them alive both in his own heart and in those of his people. In the words of his own biography, "his public instructions as well as private conversation, at visitations and elsewhere, abounded with allusions to those happy days of the past, and with expressions of ardent longing for their return; and to this point might the whole course of his ministry be said more or less to turn. In 1822, the second year of his ministry, we find him along with another congenial spirit, the humble and godly Dr. George Wright of Stirling, bending over the old records of the kirk-session bearing on the dates 1742–9, and with solemn interest deciphering the dim and fading lines that referred to the incidents of the work as then in progress. Towards the close of the same year (Dec. 1822), on two successive Sabbaths, he preached directly and fully on the subject, taking for his text those singularly appropriate and impressive words in Micah vii. 1—'Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; my soul desired the first ripe fruit:'—bringing the whole case of past attainment and subsequent declension before the congregation, and calling upon them again to arise and seek the Lord. In 1830, in consequence of some unusual outbreaks of sin, in connection with drunken brawls, a parochial day of fasting and prayer, in the view of prevailing sins and backslidings, was appointed by the kirk-session, and observed with marked seriousness and solemnity. In 1832 the near approach of the cholera,

which fell heavily on the neighbouring village of Kirkintilloch, but never actually entered Kilsyth, while sounding its own terrible peal, at the same time summoned the pastor to lift up his voice in another earnest call to repentance and newness of life. In 1836 he read an elaborate essay before a clerical society in Glasgow with the twofold object of calling more extensive attention to the subject, and of drawing forth the suggestions of his brethren in regard to some signs of awakening life which were even then appearing in his own parish." About the same time he sought by means of brief, but pointed pastoral addresses to "heads of families," and on "family worship," which he printed and presented to every household in his parish, to revive the spirit of personal and family religion amongst his people. Finally, on a Sabbath afternoon in August, 1838, standing on the grave of his revered predecessor Mr. Robe, on the anniversary of his death, and taking as his text the words inscribed in Hebrew letters on his tomb, Isaiah xxvi. 19, he pled before a vast assemblage of his people, in behalf of Christ and the new birth unto eternal life, in tones of unaccustomed earnestness, and which stirred the hearts of many in a manner never to be forgotten. By such means as these did he seek through successive years to strengthen the things that remained and were ready to die, and, if so it might be, fan the feeble spark once more into a flame. The result was seen in a growingly heightened tone of moral and religious life in the congregation and parish generally, as well as latterly in more specific tokens of the divine power and presence, which seemed the precursors

of a still richer blessing yet to come. There was a marked increase of seriousness and devout earnestness in public worship. Prayer-meetings became at once more numerous and more fervent. One or two sermons at communion times, marked by a peculiar unction and power, had fallen with visibly solemnizing effect on the congregation—one in particular, by the Rev. A. N. Somerville of Anderston, Glasgow, on the words, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," which imprinted itself on many hearts, and was afterwards often referred to as marking an era in the religious history of the parish. Conversions, in fine, of a more than usually striking kind, became more frequent, and contributed at once to arrest the attention of the careless, and to animate the hopes and quicken the prayers of those who were looking and longing for the heavenly shower.

Meanwhile influences of a concurrent kind were at work elsewhere, and tended still further to quicken the pulse of religious life in the place. Similar tokens of reviving earnestness were appearing more or less extensively amongst the members of the other Christian denominations around, and particularly in connection with a small but very fervent society of Wesleyan Methodists, whose distinctive teaching tended greatly to emphasize in the minds of the people the great ideas of conversion, the new birth, and the conscious peace and life of God, and whose unwearied activity and zeal for the gathering in of souls spread by a happy infection to the hearts of others.

It was in these circumstances, and to a field thus prepared, that the young evangelist now came, bearing the

precious seed which he had already sown with such hopeful promise in Dundee. The remarkable scene which followed has been already often described, and I should have almost shrunk from attempting any fresh account of it, did there not happily survive a full and deliberate statement from my brother's own hand, which will enable us to survey it from a new and deeply interesting point of view. It was written during a quiet interval in the manse of Kilsyth exactly a year after the occurrences to which it refers, and is couched in a tone of solemn thoughtfulness and utter self-abnegation, in the presence of Him whose wondrous works he records, which imparts a peculiar weight to every word, and the impression of which would be marred only, not helped, by any laboured description of ours:—

"Having a spare hour, it has occurred to my mind that it may be for the glory of God that I should at last record my recollections of the marvellous commencement of the Lord's glorious work in this place in the month of July, 1839, and I entreat the special aid of the Holy Ghost, that I may write according to his own will and for the divine glory regarding these wonders of the Lord Jehovah. During the first four months of my ministry, which were spent at Dundee, I enjoyed much of the Lord's presence in my own soul, and laid in large stores of divine knowledge in preparing from week to week for my pulpit services in St. Peter's Church. But though I endeavoured to speak the truth fully, and to press it earnestly on the souls of the people, there was still a defect in my preaching at that time which I have since learned to correct, viz. that, partly from unbelieving

doubts regarding the truth in all its infinite magnitude, and partly from a tendency to shrink back from speaking in such a way as visibly and generally to alarm the people, I never came, as it were, to throw down the gauntlet to the enemy by the unreserved declaration and urgent application of the divine testimony regarding the state of fallen man and the necessity of an unreserved surrender to the Lord Jesus in all his offices in order that he may be saved. However, I was gradually approaching to this point, which I had had in my eye as the grand means of success in converting souls, from the first time I entered the pulpit, and even from the day of my own remarkable conversion, of which I trust the Lord may enable me to leave some record behind on this earth for the glory of his own infinite *sovereign* and everlasting love in Christ. During the last three Sabbaths that I was at Dundee, before coming to Kilsyth, I was led in a great measure to preach without writing, not because I neglected to study, but in order that I might study and pray for a longer time; and in preaching on the subjects which I had thus prepared, I was more than usually sensible of the divine support. The people also seemed to feel more deeply solemnized, and I was told of some who were shedding silent tears under the word of the Lord. I was to have preached on the evening of the fast-day at Kilsyth, July 18th, but the burial of my dear brother-in-law, George Moody, at Paisley was fixed for that day and I was of course obliged to be present thereat. His death was accompanied with a blessing from Jehovah to my soul. I never enjoyed, I think, sweeter realizations of the

glory and love of Jesus, and of the certainty and blessedness of his eternal kingdom, than when at Paisley on this solemn occasion. The beautifully consistent and holy walk of our dear departed brother, with the sweet divine serenity that marked the closing scene of his life, made his death very affecting, and eminently fitted to draw away the heart of the believer after him to Jesus in the heavenly glory. This was its effect on my soul through the Lord's power. On the way to the grave I wept with joy, and could have praised the Lord aloud for his love in allowing me to assist in carrying to the bed of rest a member of his 'own body, of his flesh, and of his bones;' and when I looked for the last time on the coffined body in its narrow, low, solitary, cold resting-place, I had a glorious anticipation of the second coming of the Lord, when He would himself raise up in glory everlasting that dear body which he had appointed us to bury in its corruption and decay.

"I have taken this retrospect of circumstances in my own history previous to the time of my coming to Kilsyth, as they bore very powerfully upon my own state of mind, and were among the means by which the Lord finished my preparation—a preparation which he had begun even in my infancy—for being employed as his poor and despised but yet honoured instrument in beginning and in assisting to carry on the wonderful work that followed. I was appointed to preach at Kilsyth on Friday evening. I did so from Psalm cxxx. 1, 2, a subject I had lately handled in Dundee after studying Owen's treatise on this psalm. I believe I preached with considerable

solemnity, and in a manner in some degree fitted to alarm unconverted sinners and sleeping saints. I remember that some of the people of God seemed to respond with great fulness of heart to many of my petitions in public prayer, that while I was preaching there was a deep solemnity upon the audience, and that some of the Lord's people met me as I retired apparently much affected and testifying that the Lord had been among us. On Saturday I preached at Banton from Psalm cxxx. 3, with considerable assistance, as far as I can recollect. My uncle Dr. Burns of Paisley seemed to feel as if the Lord was with me, and kindly asked me to take his place at Kilsyth on Sabbath evening, leaving him to fill mine on Monday forenoon. He spoke also, I remember, in the family of its not being my duty to go abroad as I was on the eve of doing, but that I should be a home missionary in Scotland. I myself did not speculate anxiously about the future, but desired to be an instrument of advancing his work at the present time. In the evening of Saturday I met with one or two persons under deep distress of soul; and one of these, who is now a consistent follower of Jesus, seemed to enter into the peace of God while I was praying with her. This brought the work of the Spirit before me in a more remarkable and glorious form than I had before witnessed it, and served at once to quicken my desires after, and encourage my anticipations of seeing some glorious manifestation of the Lord's saving strength. On Sabbath everything went on as usual until the conclusion of the third table service, if I remember right, when Dr. Burns kindly shortened his own address and introduced me to

the people, that I might give a short address not only to the communicants but to all present in the church. I had no precise subject in view on which to speak, but when rising was led to John xx., if I mistake not, simply by its opening to me and appearing suitable. This subject I tried to generalize as depicting the experience of a saint in seeking communion with Jesus, and the manner in which Jesus often deals with such. I had much assistance, and was especially enabled to charge hundreds of the communicants with betraying Christ at his table. I heard afterwards of some that were much moved at this time, and in particular of one woman who was then first apprehended by the Spirit and has been to all appearance converted. In the evening I preached from Matthew xi. 28, but, as far as I can recollect, without remarkable assistance or remarkable effects. At the close, however, I felt such a yearning of heart over the poor people among whom I had spent so many of my youthful years in sin, that I intimated I would again address them before bidding them farewell—it might be never to meet again on earth; and that I would do so in the market-place, in order to reach the many who absented themselves from the house of God, and after whom I longed in the bowels of Jesus Christ. This meeting was fixed for Tuesday at 10 A.M., as I intended that day to leave Kilsyth on my return to Dundee. On Monday evening we had a meeting of the Missionary Society—Dr. Burns preached an excellent sermon from Isaiah lii. 1, in which some things were said upon Christ's wedding-garment which touched my heart. In speaking I felt the case of the heathen lying nearer

my heart than I think ever before or since, and was enabled, though without any previous idea of what I was to say, to speak with liberty and power of the Holy Ghost.

"This and all other similar facts I would testify as in the sight of Jehovah, and as being obliged to do so for his glory. May he enable me to give the glory all to him, and take none of it at all to my own cursed flesh! The people seemed much impressed. The meeting, however, was not very large. I can hardly recall the feelings with which I went to preach on Tuesday morning —a morning fixed from all eternity in Jehovah's counsels as an era in the history of redemption. May the Holy Ghost breathe upon my soul and revive in my memory, too faithless, alas! to the records of the Lord's wondrous works, the recollection of the marvellous scene which was then displayed before the wondering eyes of many favoured sinners in this place. Though I cannot speak with precision of the frame of soul in which I went to the Lord's work on that memorable day, yet I remember in general that I had an intense longing for the conversion of souls and the glory of Emmanuel, that I mourned under a sense of the awful state of sinners without Christ, their guilt in rejecting him as freely offered to their acceptance, my own total inability to help them by anything that I could do, and my complete unfitness and unworthiness to be an instrument in the hands of the Holy Ghost in saving their souls; while at the same time my eyes were fixed on the Lord as the God of salvation with a sweet hope of his glorious appearing. I have since heard that some of the people of God

in Kilsyth who had been longing and wrestling for a time of refreshing from the Lord's presence, and who had during much of the previous night been travailing in birth for souls, came to the meeting not only with the hope, but with well-nigh the certain anticipation of God's glorious appearing, from the impressions they had had upon their own souls of Jehovah's approaching glory and majesty, especially when pleading at his footstool. The morning proved very unfavourable for our assembling in the open air, and this seems to have been a wise providential arrangement; for while, on the one hand, it was necessary that our meeting should be intimated for the open air, in order to collect the great multitude; on the other hand, it was very needful, in order to the right management of so glorious a work as that which followed, that we should be assembled within doors. At ten o'clock I went down to the middle of the town, and with some others drove up before us some stragglers who were remaining behind the crowd. When I entered the pulpit, I saw before me an immense multitude from the town and neighbourhood filling the seats, stairs, passages, and porches, all in their ordinary clothes, and including many of the most abandoned of our population. I began, I think, by singing the 102d Psalm, and was affected deeply when in reading it I came to these lines:

> "'Her time for favour which was set,
> Behold, is *now* come to an end.'

That word '*now*' touched my heart as with divine power, and encouraged the sweet hope that the set time was really *now* at hand. I read without comment, but with solemn

feelings, the account of the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; and this account, I am told, affected some of the people considerably. When we had prayed a second time, specially imploring that the Lord would open on us the windows of heaven, I preached from the words (Psalm cx. 3): 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' This subject I had studied and preached on at Dundee without any remarkable effect; and though I was so much enlarged on this occasion in discoursing from it, I have not been able to treat it in the same manner, or with the same effects, at any subsequent time. The following was the plan of the remarks which I was led to make upon the words:—I. The persons spoken of—they are God's elect—those given to Christ of the Father. II. The promise of the Father to Emmanuel regarding these persons—'they shall be willing.' 1. Willing to be saved by Christ's righteousness alone. 2. Willing to take on his yoke. 3. Willing to bear his cross. III. The time of the promise—the day of Emmanuel's power. 1. It is the day of his exaltation at the Father's right hand (verse 1), *i.e.* the latter day. 2. It is the day of the free preaching of the Divine word. 3. It is the day in which Christ crucified is the centre and sum of the doctrine taught. 4. It is the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—'The Lord shall send,' &c. I was led under this last particular to allude to some of the most remarkable outpourings of the Spirit that have been granted to the church, beginning from the day of Pentecost; and in surveying this galaxy of Divine wonders, I had come to notice the glorious revelation of Jehovah's

right hand which was given at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630, while John Livingstone was preaching from Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27, when it pleased the sovereign God of grace to make bare his holy arm in the midst of us, and to perform a work in many souls resembling that of which I had been speaking, in majesty and glory! In referring to this wonderful work of the Spirit, I mentioned the fact that when Mr. Livingstone was on the point of closing his discourse a few drops of rain began to fall, and that when the people began to put on their coverings, he asked them if they had any shelter from the drops of Divine wrath, and was thus led to enlarge for nearly another hour in exhorting them to flee to Christ, with so much of the power of God, that about five hundred persons were converted. And just when I was speaking of the occasion and the nature of this wonderful address, I felt my own soul moved in a manner so remarkable that I was led, like Mr. Livingstone, to plead with the unconverted before me *instantly* to close with God's offers of mercy, and continued to do so until the power of the Lord's Spirit became so mighty upon their souls as to carry all before it, like the rushing mighty wind of Pentecost! During the whole of the time that I was speaking, the people listened with the most rivetted and solemn attention, and with many silent tears and inward groanings of the spirit; but at the last their feelings became too strong for all ordinary restraints, and broke forth simultaneously in weeping and wailing, tears and groans, intermingled with shouts of joy and praise from some of the people of God. The appearance of a great part of the people from the pulpit gave me an

awfully vivid picture of the state of the ungodly in the day of Christ's coming to judgment. Some were screaming out in agony; others, and among these strong men, fell to the ground as if they had been dead; and such was the general commotion, that after repeating for some time the most free and urgent invitations of the Lord to sinners (as Isaiah lv., Revelation xxii. 17), I was obliged to give out a psalm, which was soon joined in by a considerable number, our voices being mingled with the mourning groans of many prisoners sighing for deliverance. After Dr. Burns and my father had spoken for a little and prayed, the meeting was closed at three o'clock, intimation having been given that we would meet again at six.

"To my own astonishment during the progress of this wonderful scene, when almost all present were overpowered, it pleased the Lord to keep my soul perfectly calm. Along with the awful and affecting realization which I obtained of the state of the unconverted, I had such a view of the glory redounding to God, and the blessings conferred on poor sinners, by the work that was advancing, as to fill my soul with tranquil joy and praise. Indeed I was so composed, that when, with the view of recruiting my strength for the labours still in view, I stretched myself on my bed on going home, I enjoyed an hour of the most refreshing sleep, and rose as vigorous in mind and body as before."

I have given in the Appendix the notes from his own manuscript of the sermon, the delivery of which was productive of so remarkable an effect; but it may well be conceived that in this case the written words convey but

a very inadequate impression of the spoken address, to which they scarcely bore a greater resemblance than the black glistening fuel to the live coal glowing with bright furnace heat. His manner indeed at first, and through nearly one-half of the discourse, was, as usual, calm, deliberate, measured; nor did he, I think, greatly diverge either in words or in sequence of thought, from the line of the written discourse; but there was about him throughout an awful solemnity, as if his soul was overshadowed with the very presence of Him in whose name he spoke; and as he went on, that presence seemed more and more to pass within him, and to possess him, and to bear him along in a current of strong emotion, which was alike to himself and to his hearers irresistible. Appeal followed appeal in ever-increasing fervour and terrible energy, till at last, as he reached the climax of his argument, and vehemently urged his hearers to fight the battle that they might win the eternal prize, the words, "no cross, no crown," pealed from his lips, not so much like a sentence of ordinary speech, as a shout in the thick of battle. Another moment of intense and incontrollable emotion I vividly remember. In urging sinners to an immediate closing with Christ in the offers of his grace, he had made use of the obvious and very common figure of a life-boat bringing hope and deliverance to the side of a foundering vessel; when in developing the idea and dwelling on it, the whole scene seemed to pass in living reality before his eyes—the doomed bark rolling helplessly amid the wild waves, and rapidly settling down; the crouching, trembling throng clinging to the gunwale, and the light

buoyant skiff leaping up towards them amid the blinding spray, so near that they might almost touch it; and as he saw them still hesitating and wasting in fatal inaction the last moments of opportunity, he cried aloud as one might do from the summit of a neighbouring headland on the shore, "Are you in? are you in? Flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before you; now or never." There was in his whole style and manner at this moment, as frequently afterwards at similar times, a dramatic vividness and energy, which reminded one of what we read of in Whitfield;—a vividness and energy, however, which in my brother's case was not in any measure due to a graphic poetic fancy, but simply to an intense and awful realization of eternal truths. As to the scene itself which followed, I can think of no better description than the account of the day of Pentecost, in the second chapter of the Acts, of which both in its immediate features and in its after results, and in everything except the miraculous gift of tongues, it seems to me to have been an exact counterpart.

It is from this time that we must date a remarkable change in my brother's manner of preaching, which Mr. Moody Stuart has described in a manner so admirable, that I am tempted to transcribe his words: "At Kilsyth there was fulfilled in him the promise, 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in.' For weeks before he was full of prayer; he seemed to care for nothing but to pray. In the day-time, alone or with others, it was his chief delight, and in the night watches he might be overheard praying aloud. Yet during this

time the power that rested upon himself did not affect his preaching; it was sensible, clear, orthodox, unobjectionable; and in that indeed he never altered; for in the midst of whatever excitement, there was never any eccentricity or extravagance of doctrine, or even the extreme pressing of any one point; but a steadfast keeping within lines of received truth, as not expecting conversion by any special way of stating the gospel, but by the power of the Spirit accompanying it. For a season, however, before the Kilsyth communion, he seemed two different men in private and public—his own spiritual strength so far exceeding what appeared in the pulpit. But then the Lord, who had strengthened David to slay the lion and the bear in the recesses of the mountains, sent him forth to triumph over Goliath before the hosts of Israel. He had been asking, seeking, knocking, for the Holy Spirit; that Spirit came upon him with power; and the Lord added unto the church daily such as should be saved, multitudes both of men and women."

The movement thus begun in a manner so remarkable, went on steadily, and for weeks thereafter seemed only to grow in solidity and depth. Meetings for prayer and preaching of the gospel were held every successive night, generally in the church, and occasionally, when the weather favoured, in the market-place or in the churchyard. Crowds of inquirers flocked at every invitation to the vestry or the manse to seek spiritual counsel from the minister and his assistants. Prayer-meetings both of the old and young sprang up everywhere in the village and the surrounding hamlets. The neighbouring exten-

sion church of Banton, erected through my father's exertions a short time before, and then under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Lyon, now of Broughty-Ferry, became the scene of a similar work of awakening and spiritual blessing. Ministers from all parts of the country, and especially from the neighbouring city of Glasgow, came to the help of the overtasked pastor, and greatly contributed by the richness and variety of their instructions to impart stability and spiritual substance to a movement which might otherwise have largely evaporated in mere excitement. The mountain glen, the solitary haugh, even the noisy loomshop, became vocal often with the sounds of prayer and praise, or witnessed the solemn converse of brethren who, at eventide, talked with burning hearts of the things that had come to pass in those days. The whole tone and spirit of the place seemed for the moment changed, and an air almost Sabbatic brooded over it, which strangers recognized as with instinctive reverence they approached the spot. In the words of a statement read at the time by the minister of the parish to the presbytery of the bounds, "The waiting on of young and older people at the close of each meeting, and the anxious asking of so many 'What to do;' the lively singing of the praises of God, which every visitor remarks; the complete desuetude of swearing and of foolish talking in our streets; the order and solemnity at all hours prevailing; the voice of praise and prayer almost in every house; the cessation of the tumults of the people; the consignment to the flames of volumes of infidelity and impurity; the coming together for Divine worship of such

a multitude of our population day after day; the large catalogue of new intending communicants giving in their names, and conversing in the most interesting manner on the most important subjects; not a few of the old careless sinners and frozen formalists awakened and made alive to God; the conversion of several poor colliers, who have come to me and given the most satisfactory account of their change of mind and heart, — are truly wonderful proofs of a most surprising and delightful revival. The public-houses, the coal-pits, the harvest reaping fields, the weaving loomsteads, the recesses of our glens, and the sequestered haughs around, all may be called to witness that there is a mighty change in this place for the better."

The subject of this memoir had been obliged to leave a few days after the commencement of the remarkable scenes just described, in order to resume his duties at Dundee, where his work was becoming every day more interesting; but on the 21st of September he was again at Kilsyth, taking part in the services of a second communion, which the new birth of so many souls, and the fresh baptism and abounding joy of others, had rendered necessary. It was a season long to be remembered, alike for the solemnity and sacred sweetness of its services, and for the rich tokens of blessing which both accompanied and followed it. To use again the grave words of the pastor, "Having been preceded, accompanied, and followed by a very unusual copiousness of prayer, the showers in answer were very copious and refreshing. We are daily hearing of good done to

strangers who came Zaccheus-like to see what it was, who have been pierced in heart and have gone away new men. Our own people of Christian spirit have been greatly enlivened and strengthened, and some very hopeful cases of apparently real beginnings of new life have been brought to our knowledge. I feel grateful to the God of grace and God of order in the churches, that there has been such a concurrence of what is true, venerable, pure, just, lovely and of good report, and that little indeed has escaped from any of us which can justly cause regret. . . . . The solemn appearance of the communion tables, and the delightful manner in which they were exhorted—the presence of not a few unusually young disciples at the tables—the seriousness of aspect in all, and the softening and melting look of others—made upon every rightly disposed witness a very delightful impression. . . . For ninety years, doubtless, there has not been in this parish such a season of prayer and holy communings and conferences, nor at any period such a number of precious sermons delivered. The spiritual awakenings and genuine conversions at this time are not few, and it is hoped will come forth to victory; but the annals of eternity only will divulge the whole." At this point my brother's personal journal, which the exciting and absorbing labours of the last month had almost wholly interrupted, becomes again available, and I gladly return to it, as furnishing at once the most authentic and most impressive account both of the work in which he was engaged and of the part which he himself bore in it.

"*Saturday, 21st September*, 1839.—I stayed at Mr. Guthrie's[1] all night, and started at seven A.M. by the boat for Kilsyth. The boat was nearly filled in the cabin by dear brothers and sisters in Christ, going to the communion at Kilsyth. We had much blessed converse together, and engaged twice in prayer and once in praise. We arrived at a quarter to one, and found that I was expected to officiate at half-past two o'clock. I accordingly preached to about a thousand from Romans x. 4, with much assistance. On Sabbath, after Mr. Rose had preached at the tent, I was called on to follow him; and accordingly preached for about two hours from Isaiah liv. 5, to a congregation which, according to a calculation founded on the extent of the ground which it occupied, is thought to have been little short of ten thousand. They were very solemn and attentive, hardly one removing during the sermon; and though I did not notice many under visible impression, I was told that not a few were in tears, young men as well as others. After leaving the tent I went to the communion table, which was addressed in a most interesting way upon the love of Christ by Mr. Rose. I did not, however, experience much near communion with my blessed Lord and Saviour, but had to complain of much blindness and deadness, while my soul was not altogether unmoved through his free and infinite grace. After Dr. Dewar,[2] Mr. Middleton of Strathmiglo, and Mr. Somerville,[3] had preached at the tent, I was called again to preach the evening sermon there at seven o'clock, while Mr. Rose did so in the church. The subject was Isaiah liv. 10, 'The mountains shall depart,' &c.; and I was so much assisted both in exposition and exhortation, that there was visible among the people a far greater awakening than during any part of the day. We continued together till between nine and ten, the moon being full and

[1] The Rev. Dr. Thomas Guthrie, then of St. John's Parish, afterwards of St. John's Free Church, Edinburgh.

[2] Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen.

[3] Of Anderston Church, Glasgow.

the sky unclouded, though the mist began to settle in the hollow in which the tent was placed. After we had gone home, my father and Mr. Rose not having yet come in, it struck me, while at tea, that we ought to have a meeting still in the church, and continue all night in prayer to God for the outpouring of the Spirit. Some objected, but Charles Brown[1] was completely on my side, saying that he was put in mind of that occasion on which the friends of Jesus sought to lay hold of him, saying 'He is beside himself;' and accordingly we again repaired to the church, where many were already assembled joining in prayer with Mr. Martin of Bathgate and Mr. Middleton, and after the bell had been rung and the church was filled, Charles J. Brown sang and spoke upon a part of Psalm lxxii., and then prayed. When he had concluded, Mr. Martin spoke on Psalm xiv. to those still unawakened, and engaged in prayer according to concert specially for the same class. Mr. Somerville then addressed the awakened, but not yet converted, from the account of the conversion of Saul, and afterwards prayed for them as Mr. Martin had before done for the others. I was then called in conclusion to speak more generally to all, and did so at considerable length and very calmly from the first four verses of the 116th Psalm, which having been sung the whole was concluded with prayer. We separated from this most precious meeting, in which not a few were awakened, at three A.M. of Monday, and after leaving the church Mr. Somerville and I were forced to remain in the session-house with the distressed, instructing and praying till between five and six o'clock, when we went home to rest. The cases in the session-house were numerous and very interesting.

September 23d.—Having risen from a refreshing sleep at twelve noon, I was told that I was expected to preach the second sermon about two at the tent. I was counselled by my mother to beware of harsh expressions in preaching

[1] The Rev. Dr. C. J. Brown, then of New North Parish, now of New North Free Church, Edinburgh.

and prayer, and told by J. that she thought there was a danger of my losing the former sweetness, as she said, of my manner in preaching for an unpleasant sternness. I thanked the Lord for this counsel, and was told by her afterwards that I had been enabled to correct the fault. There were an immense number of ministers and preachers at the tent on Monday, and I went down under some anxiety, as I had no special preparation. However, I was enabled in private and public prayer to cast myself on the Lord, and he did *not* prove a wilderness to me, a land of darkness, but aided me beyond all my expectations. The text from which I spoke was Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 'A new heart also will I give you,' and I found so much laid to my hand, both in expounding and applying the subject, that I could hardly get done. There was great attention among the audience, which might amount to two thousand, and blessed be God, some of the ministers present seemed to be convinced that the Lord had helped me to be faithful; Charles J. Brown and John Duncan spoke particularly in this way. In the evening Charles J. Brown preached a most excellent discourse in the church at eight o'clock, from the words in Matthew, 'What do ye more than others?' showing 1st. *Why* Christians might be expected to do more than others, and 2nd. *What* more they were expected to do. After he had concluded I felt deeply impressed with the desirableness of continuing in prayer to God, especially with and for the unconverted, whom we were, alas! to leave at the close of this blessed season farther in many cases from Jesus than before. I accordingly proposed to Charles J. Brown that I should ask the unconverted to stay behind, not excluding others who might also desire to do so. He said I should do as I thought best, and accordingly after the praise was ended, I asked those who knew that they were still unconverted to remain, coming down into the front seats below to be addressed and prayed for. My thus assigning them particular seats rather alarmed and staggered Mr. Brown, and, as I afterwards found, my

CHAPTER V.

1839.

ST. PETER'S, DUNDEE.

THE reader will have seen that in turning aside to refer to the second communion at Kilsyth, and thus bring into one view the history of the remarkable movement there, we have necessarily anticipated somewhat the actual course of events in Mr. Burns' life. He returned to Dundee on the 8th of August, and almost immediately on his arrival found himself in the midst of scenes essentially similar to, and scarcely less remarkable than those he had left behind. "For some time before," says Mr. Bonar in his admirable memoirs of M'Cheyne, "Mr. Burns had seen symptoms of deeper attention than usual, and real anxiety in some that had hitherto been careless. But it was after his return from Kilsyth that the people began to melt before the Lord. On Thursday, the second day after his return, at the close of the usual evening prayer-meeting in St. Peter's, and when the minds of many were deeply solemnized by the tidings which had reached them, he spoke a few words about what had for some days detained him from them, and invited those to remain who felt the need of an outpouring of the Spirit to convert them. About a hundred

remained; and at the conclusion of a solemn address to these anxious souls, suddenly the power of God seemed to descend, and all were bathed in tears. At a similar meeting, next evening, in the church, there was much melting of heart and intense desire after the Beloved of the Father; and on adjourning to the vestry the arm of the Lord was revealed. No sooner was the vestry-door opened to admit those who might feel anxious to converse, than a vast number pressed in with awful eagerness. It was like a pent-up flood breaking forth; tears were streaming from the eyes of many, and some fell on the ground, groaning, and weeping, and crying for mercy. Onward from that evening meetings were held every day for many weeks; and the extraordinary nature of the work justified and called for extraordinary services. The whole town was moved. Many believers doubted; the ungodly raged; but the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed."

The scenes at Kilsyth were in every essential particular repeated here, allowing only for the difference between a quiet country village and a large and busy manufacturing town. The crowded and solemnized assemblies in the church from night to night for months together; the eager throngs of inquirers, sometimes so numerous as to form themselves a congregation; the varied and weighty instructions of ministers, followed generally by more special counsels and prayers for those whose overmastering anxiety constrained them to remain behind; the numberless prayer-meetings of old and young, in private rooms, in workshops, in retired gardens, in open fields; the

nightly journey of thirsty souls from far distances in the outskirts of the city, and in the rural parishes around; the general sensation and spirit of inquiry—half-serious, half-curious—which pervaded more or less the entire community,—were here as there the salient features of a time which none who lived through it, and entered in any measure into the feeling of it, can ever have forgotten. For its more authentic and inward history, however, I now gladly return to Mr. Burns' own journal, which after a few broken and fragmentary notices, becomes again continuous and copious:—

"*August 24th.*—I ought to have been daily recording the wonders of the Lord's love in this book, had they not been so many that I could not find time to speak of them all. I shall now however try to do so regularly, though in the briefest form. Since the 20th, many notable things have occurred. The church has been crowded every night, and many have been forced to go away without getting in. Mr. Reid assisted me on Wednesday, preaching in a very searching manner on regeneration from John iii., and Mr. Bonar from Kelso followed him on Job xxii. 21. I then myself prayed and spoke till near 11 p.m., on Joel ii. 28–32. On Thursday James Hamilton from Abernyte lectured on the young man, Mark x. 17, after which I read and commented on a passage from Robe's narrative. Last night Mr. Baxter preached with much solemnity and more of the freeness of the gospel than usual, from Jeremiah xv. 15, after which I read another passage from Robe, and before pronouncing the blessing was led to speak particularly to Roman Catholics, and of our duty towards them. Mr. Roxburgh was there last night. Indeed we have daily not a few of the ministers in town and from a distance among the audience. On Thursday I was called to visit a Roman Catholic family, the mother very ill; they had

been visited by the priest, but were not satisfied, and seemed to welcome me. I hear daily many interesting evidences that the work of the Lord is going on through his own mighty power. Some of the greatest drunkards have been abstaining from day to day from their cup of poison that they may attend our meetings, and they appear to be daily receiving deeper impressions. O Lord! grant that these may at last prove saving. I was told of a man last night who, though previously ungodly, had been so much impressed by attending the meetings, that his wife, a godly woman, missing him the other morning at the breakfast hour, found him in the other room on his knees, and again awaking at four in the morning and missing him from his bed, she rising found him in the same room with his Bible in his hand."

Here follow a number of interesting cases.

"*August 28th.*—On Saturday evening the congregation was large. I preached with very considerable assistance from God on Psalm xxxii., particularly with a reference to the day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, which by the recommendation of the session I was to intimate for Tuesday, the fair-day. On Sabbath forenoon I preached with much of God's presence and power from John iv. 10, and in the afternoon with still greater liberty from Romans viii. 34. In the forenoon the church was densely crowded, and in the afternoon every corner was filled, so that I could not, without much difficulty, force my way to the pulpit; hundreds were forced to be excluded. I never felt so powerfully as in the afternoon the absolute certainty of the believer's acceptance as righteous through Jesus; and the people appeared to be much impressed, although I have not yet heard of any new cases of awakening or conversion. In the evening I thought it better not to preach, in order to save my bodily strength for preaching, as I had intimated I would, in the Meadows; but being told that a great crowd was assembled, I ran up to renew the charge

on Satan's hosts, and was told that Mr. Miller[1] a preacher from Edinburgh, who had filled Mr. Lewis' pulpit during the day, and was come along to be a hearer, would gladly assist me. When however I went up, the multitude had dispersed, and we would have given up thoughts of preaching had not a few pressed us to go on. Mr. Miller accordingly preached from John iii. 8 to a considerable number, which was rapidly increasing when we dismissed. On Monday night Mr. Macalister preached a truly admirable gospel sermon from John xii. 21, after which I intimated the fast for Tuesday, with remarks as I was enabled to make on the subject. We particularly agreed to keep from 10 to 11 in secret prayer by concert. On coming home I found a letter from the magistrates interdicting the preaching in the Meadows for Tuesday, which did not surprise me, but led me to meditate solemnly on that approaching conflict with the world and Satan in which many will probably be called to die for the name of Jesus. O Lord! may Jesus Christ be magnified in *me* whether by life or by death! I immediately was led to see the propriety of exchanging the Meadows for St. Peter's Churchyard, and accordingly next day, at the hour appointed, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Miller, and myself, after intimating the will of the magistrates in the Meadows, walked, accompanied by a great number, from thence to the churchyard, where many were already assembled. Mr. Baxter began the services by praise and prayer, and I was then called after prayer to preach. I had however no enlargement, and after speaking about the usual time under great conscious desertion of the Spirit, I came to a close. Mr. Miller concluded with prayer and praise. In the evening Mr. Miller preached an interesting sermon from 1 Corinthians x. 31, after whom Mr. Walker from Edinburgh gave us a precious discourse on Psalm lxxxix. 15. I think the Spirit of God was much among the people of

[1] The late Rev. Patrick L. Miller, afterwards of Wallacetown (Dundee) and Newcastle.

God on this occasion, filling them with joy and wonder at the free and infinite love of Jehovah. This evening Mr. Walker preached an excellent sermon from 2 Corinthians vii. 5, after which I began to read Robe, where, finding an allusion to the Spirit convincing usually of particular sins, in the first place, I was led to speak in very plain terms of many prevailing sins, and especially of the peculiar sins of the fair-day. I had great liberty from the Spirit of God, I believe, to tell all I knew of the truth on these points, and O! may the Lord greatly bless for his own glory all his own truth which any of his servants have spoken, and pardon through the blood of Jesus all that we have said of our own invention, according to the darkness and folly of carnal reason.

"*September 2d.*—In the evening Mr. Macalister preached an excellent sermon on Song of Solomon ii. 16, after which I read Robe's narrative, and engaged in prayer more than once for the outpouring of the Spirit, which I think we received more signally perhaps than on any former night, if we except the very first meetings. There were many crying bitterly, one fell down, and when near the end I stopped and sat down in silent prayer for five minutes, that all might be brought to the point of embracing Jesus. The feeling was intense, though most calm and solemn, and to believers very sweet.

"*September 3.*—In the evening Mr. Somerville, who is on his way home from an excursion of three weeks in search of bodily vigour, preached from Genesis iii. 22, &c., a most impressive discourse, under which not a few, I am persuaded, were very much revived. After he had concluded and prayed, I read Robe, and felt so desirous to press home the glad tidings and to call down the Holy Ghost by more importunate prayer, that after the blessing had been pronounced I waited with nearly as many as could find seats out of the immense multitude who had been present till a quarter past eleven, partly instructing and exhorting them to an immediate acceptance of Jesus, and partly praying for the Holy Ghost. There

was no visible movement, but I trust some hearts were seen by Jesus moving towards him.

"*September 4th*, 1839.—I had this forenoon a call from Mr. Morgan[1] of Belfast, who had heard of the extraordinary movement among us when in Ireland, and being in Scotland felt induced to come and see its true character. He and I with Mr. Kirkaldy and Mr. Fairweather[2] the preacher, walked together a long time on the river side, conversing on the subject of the work at Kilsyth and here, after which we came into my lodgings and engaged together in Divine worship, Mr. Morgan officiating with great suitableness to our present state. Before parting he kindly agreed to preach this evening, which he accordingly did at the usual hour. His text was Romans v. 20, 21. He treated the subject with great clearness and scriptural accuracy, and added many very useful directions suited to our present circumstances. He also told me of an interesting work of God going on during the last three months in Tipperary under Mr. Trench. He had called on his people to pray specially for the unconverted, and in consequence many were awakened, and already between one and two hundred had been to all appearance savingly converted to God. Mr. Morgan is a very interesting and most judicious man, and we wonder at the marvellous goodness of our God in sending him among us. It is, like all his other blessings towards us, to the everlasting praise of the glory of his grace. After he had concluded I read as usual a quotation from Robe and made a few remarks upon it. This day I also conversed with J. J., who is in a most interesting state, and wrote home a letter to the people of Kilsyth."

Here he begins a fresh volume of the Journal, which is inscribed "A Record of the Lord's Marvellous Doings for me and many other Sinners at Dundee, 1839," and

[1] Now Dr. Morgan.

[2] Afterwards minister of Free Church, Botriphnie, Banffshire.

which consists for the first seventy-four pages of notices of individual cases of awakening and earnest inquiry, all deeply interesting, but too brief and fragmentary to be here presented. This part had been evidently examined in the following year, in connection with the after history of the individuals referred to, by Mr. M'Cheyne, in whose handwriting I find appended to many of the names such pregnant entries as the following: "Holds on her way rejoicing, October, 1840;" "I trust goes on well and steadily, October, 1840;" "Admitted her to the communion; she seems a true disciple of Christ, October, 1840;" "Admitted her joyfully to the Lord's table, April, 1840;" &c.

"*September 13th.*—I went at two o'clock to M'Kenzie's Square and preached to one or two hundred, many of whom, alas! were from other quarters. I spoke from the words, 1 Corinthians xv. 55–57, at first with great want of faith and power, but after I had stopped and prayed, with very considerable liberty. When I was just going to begin the last prayer two gentlemen came near, whom I supposed to be one of our physicians and a friend, who had been passing accidentally and been attracted by the sound, but after I had done, one of them, a reverend-looking oldish man, was gone, and the other came up and told me that this was Cæsar Malan from Geneva, and that he was Robert Haldane, W.S., Edinburgh. I at once recognized him, having sometimes called on him in the days of my vanity when with Uncle A. in Edinburgh. He told me that Malan was desirous to preach this evening, which I intimated with joy to the people as they were dispersing. How marvellous are the Lord's ways towards me and his people here! He is sending his servants to us from east and west and north and south! Surely he has some great work of his glorious grace to do among us. All the glory shall be *his!*

"Went to the church, where I met Malan, Mr. Baxter, and Mr. M'Leod, just translated from the Gaelic chapel, Edinburgh. Malan, after solemnly engaging in prayer, went to the pulpit, where he again knelt down and prayed for a minute or two in silence. He then prayed aloud shortly, sang, and then prayed sweetly at greater length. He read the 14th of John, and preached from the 27th verse. His heads were that the peace of Jesus was, 1st, a sovereign peace; 2d, a just peace; 3d, an all-ruling peace; 4th, a glorious peace. His great design appeared to be to press on believers, 'in the name of Jesus,' the duty of believing that they *are* saved. His teaching seemed to me to differ from that which is common among our best ministers, *not* in holding that assurance is of the essence of faith, which he seemed plainly not to do; nor in anything at variance with particular redemption, which he seemed also to hold distinctly, speaking always of Jesus dying for 'his beloved church,' &c.; but in pressing us very specially to believe in the name of Jesus as the Son of God with adoration and love, and again pressing all who do so to believe that they *are* saved, because God says so, not seeming to notice or to suppose the case of those who do not know whether they believe or not. He illustrated the effect of true faith in the witness of God by the following anecdote: One day when Bonaparte was reviewing some troops, the bridle of his horse slipped from his hand and his horse galloped off. A common soldier ran and laying hold of the bridle brought back the horse to the emperor's hand, when he addressed him and said, 'Well done, captain.' The soldier inquired, 'Of what regiment, sire?' 'Of the guards,' answered Napoleon, pleased with his instant belief in his word. The emperor rode off, the soldier threw down his musket, and though he had no epaulets on his shoulders, no sword by his side, nor any other mark of his advancement than the word of the emperor, he ran and joined the staff of commanding officers. They laughed at him and said, 'What have you to do here?' He replied, 'I am captain of the guards.'

They were amazed, but he said, 'The emperor has said so, and therefore I am.' In like manner, though the word of God, 'he that believeth *hath* everlasting life,' is not confirmed by the feelings of the believer, he ought to take the word of God as true because he has said it, and thus honour him as a God of truth, and rejoice with joy unspeakable. He told us plainly that we ought not to pray for the *beginning of* faith in Jesus in ourselves, though we might pray for its increase, but that we must *believe* and pray *in faith*. He seems to fear all excitement in divine worship, going to the very opposite extreme from the Methodists, saying as he did to me, that this leads men away from the simple testimony of God; and he told me he thought I had far too much when he heard me speak a few words and pray in the afternoon. I cannot, however, agree with him altogether, and I think many facts in regard to the preaching which has been most honoured in this land prove that that which is accompanied with the deepest impression of the truth on the speaker's soul, and consequently most affects the hearers, is in general most blessed for leading men to flee from the wrath to come.

"*September 14th.*—. . . I called at the M.'s, and found these sisters rejoicing with solemn delight in the death of their beloved sister with all its remarkable circumstances, which so clearly mark the hand of the gracious Lord who has called her to his kingdom and glory![1] They told me many interesting and affecting facts regarding her last days. She appears to have fed with remarkable relish upon Christ in the word during her last days, and especially the night and morning before her departure. I prayed with them, and felt drawn uncommonly near to the divine presence of our Father in heaven. We entreated earnestly that as the Lord had not allowed her to manifest her love to him in the world, he might show his love to her by making her death the means

[1] Elizabeth Miller, who died very suddenly, but in the perfect peace of God, while conversing with him in the vestry of St. Peter's Church, September 13, 1839.

of quickening many souls. O Lord Jesus, hear this prayer, and answer it abundantly to-morrow, yea, to-night! Coming home at six I found many gathered together praying and singing praises; . . . went in and prayed with the young men and women in the other room. I had much nearness to God with unspeakable composure of soul, which, praise be to the Lord, has never been ruffled during these remarkable days; though many of them were very much affected, and all seemed to realize eternity and the preciousness of Jesus! It was indeed a sweet season. W. L. came and joined the meeting with great joy, which broke in upon him with such power at the meeting last night, that he went home in transporting ecstasy. This is a sweet youth. Lord, make him a minister of thy gospel." . . .

In the following exalted strains of adoration and fervent aspiration he closes the record of a week of incessant, but to him delightful labour:—"20 *minutes to* 12—When this week is expiring I would again, with praises which must echo through all the arches of heaven, set up my Ebenezer and say, Hitherto the Lord hath helped me! O what a week of mercy and grace and love! Last week was wonderful, this is much more so; what will the next be? Perhaps it may be with Jesus in glory! O that it may at least be with Jesus, and that it may redound to the eternal glory of his grace in me and many thousands of redeemed souls! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! O scatter the clouds and mists of unbelief which exhale afresh from the stagnant marshes in my natural heart, the habitation of dragons, and pour afresh upon my ransomed soul a full flood of thy divine light and love and joy, in the effulgence of which all sin dies, and all the graces of the Spirit bloom and breathe their fragrance! Nor

do I pray for myself alone, but for all my dear friends—father, mother, brothers and sisters . . . . . —for all the people here—all the ministers of every name whom Jesus hath called to preach his gospel, and for all who shall to-morrow hear or read the glad tidings of great joy which shall yet be to all people! Lord, hasten the latter-day glory! Come quickly, and reign without bounds and without end! And now wash me in thy blood, whose price I cannot tell, but need to cleanse me, so great a transgressor am I. Glory to thee, O Lamb of God, and to thee, O Father, and to thee, O Holy Ghost, eternal and undivided! Amen!"

And so from day to day and from week to week the sacred work of this remarkable time went on—the church nightly thronged with arrested and deeply solemnized multitudes, and every other available hour occupied with individual inquirers, who in very deed sought the eternal wisdom "as silver, and searched for her as for hid treasure." Twenty, thirty, forty, would often come to him on this errand in a single day, gathering in little groups in an outer chamber and pouring out their hearts in united prayer, or in silent and solitary breathings, as they waited each their turn for a personal interview. Generally at the public assemblies, a large part of the audience would remain after the regular services were concluded, for further and more special instruction; and even when all was over, often at a late hour, eager groups would still cling around the preacher as he retired to the vestry, in hope of hearing still some last words of parting counsel and prayer. Occasionally even then it was

scarcely possible to shake off the importunate crowds who hung upon the lips of Christ's ambassadors as for their lives:—"When we left the session-house," he writes on September 19th, "we met a great multitude still waiting to hear the word, and some of them in tears. Many of these came along with Mr. W—— and me to the west end of the town, and when we came to Roseangle, Mr. W—— at my suggestion engaged with them in a parting prayer on the highway side, under the starlight faintly shining through the dark windy clouds." At one time the throng of worshippers was so great, especially during a visit of Dr. M'Donald of Urquhart, that it was found expedient to change the place of meeting from St. Peter's to St. David's Parish Church, the largest place of worship in Dundee, the use of which was kindly given by the minister, the Rev. George Lewis, who himself took a deep interest and bore an efficient part in the services. The movement may perhaps be said to have reached its climax—a kind of spring-tide flood—at the communion season in October, when the late much esteemed and highly gifted Mr. Bonar of Larbert, assisted by Messrs. Bonar of Kelso, M'Donald of Blairgowrie, and Mr. Flyter of Alness, dispensed the living bread to a vast concourse of hungering souls, "many of whom seemed burning with desire after nearness to Jesus." On the evening of the day three several congregations were assembled—one vast assemblage in the church, and two lesser ones formed out of its overflow in the adjoining school-rooms, and were addressed respectively by Mr. Bonar of Kelso, Mr. Bonar of Larbert, and Mr. Burns. "During the whole of this

communion Sabbath," he records in his journal, "there was, I am told by the ministers, an unusually deep solemnity pervading the audience—the result, I trust, of the near presence of Jehovah."

Amidst those solemn scenes Mr. Burns himself remained, in a most remarkable manner, calm and self-possessed. The great objects of faith which so mightily moved his soul, seemed to tranquillize, whilst they solemnized and stirred him, so that he moved from day to day in an element rather only of holy and exalted feeling than of excitement in the ordinary sense of the term. At the close of the most exhausting day of apparently exciting labour, his sleep would be as deep and soft as that of a child, and he arose for the next day's toil fresh and joyful, as a strong man to run his race. "I rose," says he (Sabbath, October 6, 1839), "at half past nine, and felt very strong, even after the incessant duties of Saturday—so wonderfully does the Lord refresh me with sweet sleep." And again (November 11), "I rose this morning at 11 o'clock!! This appeared to be my duty after being so long and busily engaged on Sabbath. Indeed, it is by sleeping until I am fully refreshed, more than by any other means, that my strength has been preserved undiminished, or rather, I may say, has increased during the excessive labours to which I have been called during the last three and a half months."

In regard to the character of his preaching during this period, it would appear from all I have been able to learn in regard to it, to have been characterized by great fulness, freedom, and rich copiousness of scriptural exposi-

tion and appeal, by a melting and persuasive unction, and even by a clearness and force of thought and diction, which, considering the incessant draughts made upon his resources, was very remarkable. At the same time, as he ever sought to speak, not from the mere remembered impression of past convictions, but from the immediate and present sense of eternal things, and felt constrained either to utter only that which he felt livingly in his soul or be silent altogether, his preaching was subject now, as ever afterwards, to great variations alike in fulness and in power. Thus the alternations of feeling, and consequent liberty of speech, indicated in the following extracts are only examples of what we find characteristic of his entire ministry:

"In the evening Mr. Lewis of St. David's preached from John x. 10 in a very interesting and edifying way, after which I engaged in prayer, and found so much enlargement that I continued for more than fifty minutes, and at one time got so near a view of the glory of Emmanuel that I could hardly proceed.

"*Sabbath, October 6th*, 1839.—I rose at a quarter past nine, and felt very strong even after the incessant duties of Saturday, so wonderfully does the Lord refresh me with sweet sleep. In the forenoon I preached with much comfort, though not with much depth of experience or present feeling of the truth, from Romans iii. 20, 21. In the afternoon I preached from 1 John i. 3, last clause, and was much more assisted than in the forenoon, getting a nearer view of Jehovah, and a firmer hold of the truth and also of men's consciences. The congregation seemed much solemnized; I saw some young converts rejoicing greatly, and during the last Psalm a young woman was so deeply wounded that she could not restrain her feelings, and cried aloud for mercy from the Lord. In

the evening I preached in Hiltown church from Job xxxiii. 23, 24. At first, and especially when I should have spoken of the Lord's terrors from the words 'going down to the pit,' I was much deserted, and was forced to be both bare and brief; but when I came to speak of the Lord's love and mercy I got such an insight into the subject that its glorious grace almost overcame me, the tears were flowing from my eyes, and I was enabled to speak with some degree of tenderness both in expounding the truth and in afterwards applying it to men's hearts. I could not but thank the Lord for restraining me from too much terror, and giving me on this occasion a message of love, perhaps, to some of the gainsayers. The crowd was most dense, and many hundreds were standing without or obliged to go away. A blessed Sabbath."

But anon the Beloved had withdrawn Himself and was gone:

"*Friday, October 10th.*—Mr. M'Donald met me along with Mr. Millar at Mr. Thain's gate, and we drove up together, praying each by himself for the solemn work of the evening. On arriving, we found Mr. Gillies and Mr. Mitchell of Persie Chapel waiting us. With these dear brethren we had much prayer, but I was too little in secret, partly from want of time and partly from feeling the need of mental relaxation after the all-engrossing and incessant duties of the previous days. I went in consequence to the pulpit under a load of self-dependence, and with much unbelief, which combined to intercept or prevent the rich communications of the power of the Spirit. I was, in consequence, in a considerable measure left to myself, and though in the first prayer, after struggling long to get through the clouds which shut out my soul from the light of God's countenance, I did get some sweet and melting glimpses of Emmanuel at the Father's right hand; yet in preaching, which I did from Isaiah liv. 5, I was confined almost entirely to exposition of doctrine, and was not allowed

to open and search and alarm the consciences of the secure by any hortatory application of the subject."

Amid these engrossing and abundant labours in the field of service specially allotted to him, he found time also for occasional evangelistic excursions to other places, the results of which were sometimes interesting. Thus, instead of returning straight home from the communion at Kilsyth, referred to in last chapter, he made a rapid visit to Paisley, where he preached in the High Church to a densely crowded audience, "with much assistance, from Job xxxiii. 23;" and "saw not a few in tears," as he was himself "considerably moved, not so much when preaching, as when expounding briefly Philippians ii. 5–9." On his way to Paisley an incident occurred which is worth recording, as characteristic alike of the time and of the man:

"*Tuesday, September 24th.*—In the afternoon, when on my way to Paisley, I had hardly seated myself in the Glasgow boat when an acquaintance (John Marshall, Auchinsterrie) said to me, 'You should have worship here.' 'Of course if it is agreeable to all it will be agreeable to me.' All seemed anxious for this, and the next minute the Captain came saying, 'Will you allow me to open the steerage door as the passengers there would like to hear?' This of course we gladly agreed to, and in a few minutes I found myself, to my own joyful astonishment, standing at the partition door and praying with the whole company. We also sang more than once; and I would have expounded a passage, but I had a little hoarseness and did not see it to be my duty to expose myself when I had so much of the most important work before me."

The next day he preached in the forenoon at Kirkin-

tilloch, and in the evening at Denny, where we catch a characteristic glimpse of one lofty alike in stature and in moral bearing, whom all who were present at the convocation of the ministers of the Church of Scotland in 1842 will remember as perhaps the most striking figure in that assembly: "There was a most densely crowded audience, to whom I preached with considerable assistance from Romans iii. 19, 22. Having ended at twelve o'clock, Mr. Dempster, who seemed all on fire with earnestness for a blessing on his people, came up and said a few words, adding, that if any still desired to hear more of the gospel, Mr. Duncan[1] would be glad to preach again."

The following extracts, the first of them deeply touching and characteristic, will afford a glimpse of some of his labours elsewhere:—

"*Edinburgh, October 16th,* 1839.—This forenoon I visited, after seeing several cases privately, the Orphan Hospital, under the government of my dear friend M'Dougall, with whom I one dark evening prayed in Bute upon some lonely rocks by the sea-shore, and a pious matron, Mrs. Dickson. In the governor's room I saw a fine picture of Whitefield, who was a great favourer of this institution, and when I went into the little pulpit of the chapel, saw the dear orphans so neatly clad and so beautifully arranged before me, and began to read Psalm ciii., 'Such pity as a father hath,' &c., I felt quite overpowered by a feeling of sympathy with these dear children in their orphan state, mingled with grateful wonder at the love of God in dealing so kindly with them. In prayer also I had considerable enlargement, but particularly in speaking from 2 Corinthians viii. 9, and telling them some anecdotes, I felt unusually melted myself, and yearned over

[1] Of Milton Church, Glasgow, now of New College, Edinburgh.

them, I think, in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Some of the boys and girls were crying, and when I bade them farewell, they unwillingly and with many tears withdrew. O Lord, think upon each of these dear children, convert them all to thyself through Jesus, and raise up from among the boys a great band of holy and devoted ministers and missionaries of Jesus! It was with peculiarly affecting feelings that I hurriedly bade adieu to this most interesting institution, running to be in time to visit, as I had promised, the Greenside Female School, under the conduct of Miss Haldane and other pious ladies.

"*Edinburgh, November 1st.*—I spent the whole of this forenoon till half-past twelve in private with the Lord, and enjoyed more of his glorious presence humbling and elevating my soul than I have had for some time past when alone (O! for a day every week to spend entirely in the secret of his presence!) At one o'clock I preached for the Senior Female Society in St. George's Church to a congregation composed of the genteel society of Edinburgh. I was carried *far above* the *conscious* desire of the favour, and the *conscious* fear of man; and in preaching from Isaiah xlii. 21, I felt much more of the presence of the Holy Spirit enlightening my mind in the knowledge of Christ, and melting my heart under a view of his glory and his love, than I have for some time enjoyed in public.

"*November 4th.*—At two o'clock I set out for St. Andrews in company with James Hamilton, where we arrived at half-past four, and found Mr. Lothian come to dinner to meet me at Dr. Briggs'. At seven o'clock we adjourned to the place of meeting, which was fixed to be the Secession church, holding about five hundred, in consequence of my aunt having been led to understand that I would not be allowed the parish church. This, however, does not seem to have been the case, as Dr. Buist, when he heard it rumoured that he had refused me his church, wrote to aunt, saying that it was a mistake, and that he would give it if desired. The church was

crowded by the élite of the town, including Sir David Brewster, &c. Mr. Taylor[1], the minister, began with singing and prayer, and after Mr. Lothian had said a few words, I entered the Secession pulpit and preached after prayer and praise to a most attentive and solemnized audience from Isaiah xlii. 21. A number of individuals remained to converse about the state of their souls, most of them deeply affected, and some of them only for the first time.

"After visiting Mrs. C——, an interesting Christian widow, who travails in birth again for her children, that Christ may be formed in them, and praying with her and two of her dear children, I went at eleven to Mr. Lothian's; and after he had prayed and said a few words I spoke for a little to about fifty or sixty people from John iv. 10. Many were silently weeping, though, alas! my own hard heart did not feel so tenderly as at some other times. We bade them all farewell at the door, leaving many in tears as we went into the curricle that was to convey us back to Dundee. On our way James H. and I both prayed and had much conversation about the glorious work in which we were engaged, the hopeful symptoms of an approaching revival in St. Andrews, and the necessity of making *full* proof of our ministry, taking up our cross and following Jesus whithersoever he goeth. There are a few names even in this poor desolate place that have not defiled their garments, and who begin to take pleasure in the stones of Zion and to favour her very dust. O Lord! do thou appear in thy glory among them, and turn all their hearts as the heart of one man to thyself. Father, glorify thy Son; glorify thine own name. Amen.

"O Lord Jehovah! grant to me a heart for Jesus' sake to praise thee with becoming love for all the most marvellous displays of thy love and mercy which I the chief of sinners am permitted to behold from day to day. Breathe on me, O Holy Ghost! for the glory of Emmanuel, and fill my soul with seraphic love, and my tongue with holy and unceasing praise,

[1] The Rev. James Taylor, D.D., now of Glasgow.

and O! draw by thy omnipotent grace all these dear inquiring souls to the blood and the bosom of that adorable Emmanuel whom they seek after, and whom thou camest to glorify in the hearts of sinners. Amen."

On Thursday, November 23, Mr. M'Cheyne returned from the interesting mission which had led to Mr. Burns' temporary occupancy of his pastoral charge, and from that time accordingly his official connection with St. Peter's Church and congregation closed. The following extracts will show the feelings with which he ended this first, and in some respects most eventful period of his home ministry, and the tender bond of sacred affection which still, in parting, bound him alike to that people and their pastor:

"Had a letter from dear Mr. M'Cheyne, written in a spirit of joy for the work of the Lord, which shows a great triumph, I think, of divine grace over the natural jealousy of the human heart. O Lord, I would praise thee with all my heart for this, and would entreat that when thy dear servant the pastor of this people is restored to them, he may be honoured a hundredfold more in winning souls to Christ than I have been in thine infinite and sovereign mercy. Amen.

"*Sabbath, November 17th*, 1839.—. . . In applying the subject I was remarkably aided, and just as I was concluding it came into my mind that though I might probably preach to the people again, yet that *now* I had reached the termination of my ministry, and this gave me an affecting topic from which to press home the message more urgently (subject "Union to Christ," John xv.) The season was indeed one that I shall never forget. Before me there was a crowd of immortal souls all hastening to eternity, some to heaven, and many I fear to hell, and I was called to speak to them, as it were, for the last time, to press Jesus on them, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God by the death of his Son. . . . After I had intimated that Mr. M'Cheyne was

expected to be here on Thursday, I spoke a few words on my leaving them, but I was so much affected that I could say but little, and I felt that it was a cause of praise that the Lord hid from me so much of what is affecting in my present circumstances, though I believe it were good both for the people and myself to feel this much more. The people retired very slowly when we had dismissed about five o'clock, and many waited in the passage and in the gallery until I retired, who wept much when I was passing along, and obliged me to pray with them in the passage again. When I came out I met with many of the same affecting tokens of the reality of my approaching separation from a people among whom the Lord, in his sovereign and infinite mercy, has shown me the most marvellous proofs of his covenant love, and from among whom, I trust, he has taken, during my continuance among them, not a few jewels to shine for ever in the crown of Emmanuel the Redeemer! 'Glory to the Lamb that was slain!'

"*November 18th.*—I spent the greater part of this day alone, excluding all visitors, with the exception of the M.'s of Roseangle, with the B.'s, and Miss H., who called and conversed with me together about the work of God. I wished retirement, partly to rest and partly to write to Mr. M'Cheyne and a number of other persons in different places, who must be considering me the most careless correspondent that could be imagined. I was tired, however, and was obliged to go out a considerable part of the day, so that I only got five pages written to Mr. M'Cheyne. Truly the work of the Lord is marvellous when I begin to look back upon it from the beginning. It must engage my harp and my tongue, with those of countless multitudes of the redeemed in glory, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

"*Friday, November 23d,* 1839.—I got safely home at four o'clock (from Dunfermline), and after dining with Mr. Thoms at five I met Mr. M'Cheyne at his own house at half-past six, and had a sweet season of prayer with him before the hour of

the evening meeting. We went both into the pulpit; and after he had sung and prayed shortly, I conducted the remaining services, speaking from 2 Samuel xxiii. 1-5, and concluding at ten. We went to his house together and conversed a considerable time about many things connected with the work of God, and his and my own future plans and prospects. I find he preached to a densely crowded audience on Thursday night, and with a very deep impression, from 'I am determined to know nothing among you,' &c. He seems in but weak health, and not very sanguine about ever resuming the full duties of a parish minister. O Lord, spare thy servant, if it be for the glory of thy name, and restore his full strength that he may yet be the means of winning many souls for Jesus. Amen."

CHAPTER VI.

1839–40.

ST. ANDREWS, PERTH, &c.

WITH the return of Mr. M'Cheyne, Mr. Burns' stated labours at Dundee necessarily came to a close, and though the somewhat delicate state of his friend's health still for a season rendered his assistance in pastoral work more or less needful, his movements became henceforth of a more varied and desultory kind. On the 27th he was at Abernyte, of which his endeared friend Mr. Hamilton was then the assistant minister, where he addressed a crowded audience from the words, "God so loved the world," &c. "The people seemed much solemnized, and at the close a few were shedding silent tears. Mr. Wilson, the old minister, stayed till near the end (about twelve o'clock), and seemed much interested; and dear James Hamilton, who I think is decidedly growing in grace, spoke to the people a little towards the end in a very close and affecting way." From thence he proceeded to Bridge of Earn, where, though he complained that he "did not feel particularly assisted in preaching, and was much humbled, on coming out, from a view of his own want of simple and supreme desire for the divine glory," he enjoyed much the congenial society of the minister, Mr. Cumming,

and rejoiced to hear of some hopeful tokens of a coming blessing on his field of labour. "Pray on," Mr. Somerville had said at the close of the communion services the week before, "and you will soon have a revival here." Next morning he was in Perth, and had his first sight of a field already white unto the harvest, and in which he was soon to spend many a day of abounding but delightful labour:

"*Friday, November 29th*, 1839.—I had intended to leave Perth this morning by ten o'clock, but was prevailed on by Miss M——, whom I saw at the Bridge of Earn, to think of remaining till four P.M., and then thought I might as well stay all night and preach among them; accordingly I came to Perth at one o'clock, and having met Andrew Gray at Mrs. M——'s, where I took up my lodging, it was agreed that I should preach in his church at seven o'clock. Some men were accordingly sent round to give intimation, and short and partial as the notice was, the church was crowded, and hundreds went away who could not get admittance. I preached from Job xxxiii. 24, and had unusual liberty throughout. We did not separate till near eleven, and I am persuaded that had I had time to wait there were not a few who were in deep anxiety about their souls; as it was, two men and four or five women came up after me to the vestry under deep concern.

"*Saturday, November 30th*, 1839.—I this morning met at breakfast Andrew Gray and Mr. Milne, who has just been settled in St. Leonard's Church, and with them I walked about on the quay for a considerable time waiting for the boat, which was considerably behind her time owing to the flood in the river, and had much interesting conversation. Both of these dear friends, but especially Mr. Milne, seem deeply anxious for a stirring among the dry bones in poor Perth,

where they are very many and very dry, and both kindly pressed me to come back to them soon."

He returned to Dundee, but only on his way to St. Andrews, to which he had been strongly urged to return with the view of following up the impression created at his first visit:—

"*Sabbath, November 31st*, 1839—I preached in the forenoon for Mr. Robb at Strathkinnes—text, John xv. During the first prayer I had great nearness to God. Riding straight home I went almost immediately to the parish church, and there preached to an immense audience, including Drs. Haldane, Buist, &c., Professor Jackson of the divinity chair, Sir D. Brewster, Mr. Gillespie, &c. Before all these learned men, blessed be the Lord, I was not allowed to feel in the least abashed, but testified the gospel of the grace of God to them all with as much plainness and liberty as on most other occasions—subject, Job xxxiii. 24. I preached to a most densely crowded audience in the evening in the Secession Church, with more enlargement than during the day, from Isaiah liv. 5. At half-past nine I went home, feeling less fatigued than in the morning, though I had spoken for between seven and eight hours.

"*Monday, December 1st*, 1839.—This morning I preached to the inquirers, in Mr. Lothian's church at eleven o'clock, from Psalm li., upon repentance. It was a solemn season. At two o'clock I met the fishermen in the Secession Church, and preached to them in as nautical a mode as I could command, feeling much supported. At eight o'clock I lectured to a crowded audience in the Secession Church from Luke vii. 36–52. It was an affecting subject, and not a few of the people as well as myself appeared to be in a very tender frame. On coming down from the pulpit many came to bid me farewell, with whom I was led by circumstances to stand and speak for a considerable time. Many at this

time were weeping profusely, and *I hope* the Holy Spirit was sealing some souls to the day of redemption."

These hopes were not disappointed. "To many," says an old disciple, whose name will long be fragrant in the city and neighbourhood of St. Andrews, "that season, I trust, was the birth-time of their souls, and to believers a time of great revival and refreshment. To *me*, it was a feast of fat things, and I trust of great blessing. Certainly I never heard the gospel message so clearly preached, so unfettered, so unbeclouded; and as faith cometh by hearing, so faith came to my soul, and, out of obscurity, I saw and felt the love of God in a way so melting and so overflowing as to make me weep. May I never lose the impression produced by that sermon from these words: 'He that believeth doth enter into *rest*,' and another also from Mr. Wight, 'Hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end.' What an exhibition of the fulness and freeness and completeness of salvation to the believing soul! "Doubting Castle" was quite demolished; every chain struck off; closed lips opened to shout for joy and sing praise to our redeeming God." . . .

On the 6th December he expresses himself as "in great difficulty in knowing my own duty, whether to remain steadily in Dundee or to visit it only among the many places which seem at present ripe for the harvest." In the meantime, however, he continues his evangelistic excursions, guided simply by the calls which immediately pressed upon him, and having no other plan than that of doing what his hand found to do, and doing it with his

might. The next entry is interesting, as illustrating the manner in which he unweariedly sought to sow the precious seed beside all waters, scarcely ever losing an opportunity of speaking a word in behalf of his Master wherever there was a human ear to hear it, whether in the house or by the way, on the top of a coach, on the deck or cabin of a boat, or to the random travellers on a country road. Instances of this occur perpetually, and in every variety of circumstances, in his journal, and give perhaps more than anything else in his life and ministry, the impression of one who lived for nothing else but to serve and glorify Christ. It is touching often to mark how eagerly and thankfully he hailed such opportunities, not as calls to the discharge of a difficult duty, but as special tokens of the divine mercy and favour towards himself. To give him the liberty of conducting divine worship and delivering the message of grace, at any time or in any place where a few immortal souls were gathered together, was to lay him under the deepest of all obligations. Thus no one who ever spent the briefest time alone with him, or even met him casually by the way, could for a moment doubt that in the truest and fullest sense to him "to live was Christ:"

"*Thursday, December 5th*, 1839.—I this day went by coach from Dundee to Cumbernauld. . . . At Cumbernauld I left the coach, after giving tracts to all on it and in it (a practice which I intend to follow wherever I go, as eminently calculated to advance the salvation of souls), and walked over the hill towards Kilsyth. I first made up to two boys going home from school, who seemed very ignorant of Jesus. I spoke to them, gave them tracts, and shortly prayed with them on

the road. I next met Mr. Lusk going home, with whom I also prayed on the road. At the Craigmarloch Bridge I met widow Mitchell and her daughter Agnes, an old school companion of my own. With them I prayed—going for a little into the house. At home I found all well—my father absent at the presbytery, and expected to return in the evening with some minister to officiate in the evening meeting. This duty, however, was devolved upon me. . . . I preached from Ephesians v. 1, chiefly seeking the edification of those lately converted to the Lord. During the service my father and Dr. Smyth[1] of Glasgow came in. It was delightful indeed for me to meet, after the congregation dismissed, with many of the dear lambs of Jesus' fold, who appeared to be growing in faith and love both towards Jesus and towards each other. All the road home was strewed with little groups of these dear believers waiting to welcome me back among them and receive some word of exhortation."

One object he had had in coming to the west had been to address once more the members of the Glasgow University Missionary Society, which had formed so important a link in the history of his higher life, and with which so many hallowed associations were connected. Difficulties, however, had arisen in obtaining the use of the usual place of meeting within the University, and he was constrained to content himself with a few hours of private, but to him most delightful intercourse with some of those who were most like-minded with himself in regard to the great cause he had come to plead. Meanwhile, important work was awaiting him in another quarter, where he was not expected, but much desired:

"*Saturday, December 7th.*—In the afternoon I sailed down

[1] Minister of St. George's Parish, Glasgow.

the Clyde, but was in a very dead frame of soul, and could hardly bring myself to speak for Jesus to any of the passengers. Indeed, though it is always duty to be doing the work of an evangelist, it is a duty entirely dependent upon the prior one of 'living in the Spirit.' It is a fearful sin to be going through the world with a light kindled by the Holy Ghost to guide sinners to Jesus, and yet to carry this as a dark lantern which can give no benefit to any one. But ah! how vain is it, on the other hand, to hold up a lamp to one when the light is almost out, and the oil is nearly done! May I always be like a lamp full of oil (the Holy Spirit), burning brightly with the love of Christ, and guiding those that are in darkness to the strait gate and narrow way that leadeth unto life!

"Before I left the boat I spoke to a young woman from Gourock, whom I saw in mourning, and who, I found, had lost within the last six years her father and mother, and her uncle and aunt, with whom she went to live after her parents died. She seemed anxious, but in great danger of settling on the quicksands of legality. I gave her a copy of Ralph Erskine's sermon on the *Harmony of the Divine Attributes.*

"At Port-Glasgow I found the Simpsons all well, and was delighted to find that I had indeed come opportunely, and according to a marvellous dispensation of the Lord's providence. Mr. Kennedy, expecting my brother I—— to preach his first sermon in his church on Sabbath, had agreed to go to Greenock on that day, and fill Mr. Smith's pulpit in his absence at Rutherglen communion, but, to his dismay, on Saturday morning he got a letter from I—— saying that he could not come, and that Mr. K. was mistaken in supposing that he had ever given a promise to do so. Mr. K. was just sitting with the letter in his hand, and hardly knowing what to say or do, when Mr. Simpson came in and showed him my letter from Glasgow, which I had written without any concert with I——, intimating that I would be in Port-Glasgow on Sabbath, and that I would wish him if possible to secure Mr. Smith of Greenock's pulpit for me one half of the day—the

very pulpit which Mr. K. had agreed to fill. It was accordingly fixed that I should preach forenoon and evening in Port-Glasgow, and afternoon in Greenock.

"*Sabbath, December 8th*, 1839.—In the forenoon of this hallowed day I lectured to Mr. Kennedy's people from Romans iii. 19. They seemed attentive. Riding down to Greenock, I preached, with considerable liberty from the fear of man, and desire for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners, from Job xxxiii. 24. Riding home again I preached to a crowded audience from Isaiah xlii. 21. . . . After coming home I enjoyed with the Simpsons a sweet season of communion, especially at family worship. Dear and godly Mr. Simpson seemed full of the Holy Ghost, &c. . . .

"*Monday, December 9th*, 1839.—At Paisley I stayed with my dear sister till twelve o'clock, when I set out by coach for Glasgow. She has indeed been sorely chastened, but it has been in infinite mercy, and she seems to be becoming through this means in the hand of a redeeming God and Father, a partaker of his holiness. Praise to the Lord!

"After being an hour and half alone at Uncle I——'s, I went down to a prayer-meeting of our Missionary Society Committee at Mr. Govan's.[1] There were about sixteen present. Mr. Govan began with prayer, and after we had sung I then read and spoke for some time with much comfort from a part of the 68th Psalm: 'O God! thou to thine heritage,' &c.; after which we sang a part of this sweet Psalm, and prayed, the service devolving upon me. After the blessing was pronounced, the memorial to the Senatus was read, and as its success was closely connected with the glory of the Lord in the salvation of the students, I suggested that we ought to lay it before the Lord in special prayer before we separated. Mr. Stevenson[2] accordingly prayed with us in regard to it; and we parted, seeming to have all enjoyed our meeting, and some of us at least having, I trust, found it a

[1] Now a Missionary of the Free Church, Lovedale, Africa.

[2] Now Minister of the Free Church, Pulteney Town, Wick.

meeting with the Lord Jehovah, the portion of Israel. It seemed to us a token for good that the Lord by his providence had shut us up, beyond our own intention, to begin our missionary meetings with one for prayer alone, a thing which we had never before done. Before parting I pressed upon my dear brethren the necessity of labouring for the conversion of the students of their own acquaintance, and of having prayer-meetings to which to invite such as might be under some concern about salvation, though not far enough advanced to take part in conducting such meetings.

"*Tuesday, December 10th*, 1839.—. . . . Preached to the dear Kilsyth flock in the evening from John xv. 1, 2. . . . I had in the afternoon of this day several very interesting conversations with particular individuals—as widow Miller, a remarkable old woman, who was converted on Monday evening, July 29th, in the meal-market, while I was speaking after Mr. Somerville had concluded. She appears to be making marvellous progress in the knowledge and love of Emmanuel, and being naturally of a superior cast of mind, she makes the most beautiful and striking remarks; she said, for instance, 'Oh! you must rouse them, you must rouse them to-night, just as a mason drives his chisel with his mell upon the stones; and are we not all stones—rough stones, till God hew and polish us? You roused them before, just as if you were to put a cold hand on a man's warm face.' She said also to a poor old beggar, 'Oh! you must be made new Robby; it's old Robby with you yet. I was old Betty, but I am new Betty now, and you must pour out your old heart before the Lord and get a new one,' &c."

After brief visits to Bo'ness, Dunfermline, and other places by the way, he reached Dundee once more on the 23d, and thence proceeded two days after to Perth, in which he was to find his chief scene of labour for several months to come.

The nature of the field on which he now entered, as

well as the character of him with whom especially it was his lot there to labour, will be familiar to very many of my readers from the admirable memoir of Mr. Milne, lately given to the world by Dr. Horatius Bonar. He was indeed "a man greatly beloved," and a true and worthy "yoke-fellow" of the subject of these pages throughout the whole course of those memorable days. Of one mind and of one heart, of differing gifts, but of equal devotedness and singleness of purpose in the service of Christ, they fought the good fight side by side, without a dream of personal rivalry, or any other thought whatever, but that of "striving together for the faith of the gospel." It was especially admirable to mark the perfect self-abnegation with which the young and gifted pastor saw his work, as it were, for the moment taken out of his hands ere ever he had almost entered on it; and rejoiced in the fruit of his brother's labours even as though it were his own, content either to thrust in his own sickle or to see the harvest reaped by another hand, so only the Master's garner were filled. Closely linked together in life, in affection and in sympathy, it was interesting to many also to notice that in death they were not long divided, having been called to their eternal rest within a few weeks of one another, and both at a comparatively early age, having lived much and long in a little time.

The rapid and pregnant brevity of the first notices of Mr. Burns' labours here indicate at once the remarkable power with which the sacred movement set in almost from the first day of his arrival on the scene, and the incessant and absorbing occupation which in consequence devolved

upon him. His days and nights were so filled up with acts, and with those intense exercises of soul which are the living breath of acts, that he had little time either to narrate or describe:—

"*December 28th*, 1839.—Took up my abode at Mrs. M.'s, my kind friend, at 2 King's Place. Agreed to preach twice to-morrow.

"*Sabbath, December 29th*, 1839, forenoon.—Preached in East Church, Dr. Esdaile's. I was not left to myself, I hope. Subject, Isaiah xlii. 21; time too short to allow of sufficient fulness; church full, the gay people of Perth—the magistrates present. Afternoon, St. Leonard's, great crowd; subject, conversion, Matthew xviii. 3; more aided than ever before on this text, I think; solemnity deep. Inquirers invited to meet at seven in the evening, and at one P.M. on Monday. Evening: about one hundred and fifty were present. The Lord was very near. . . . We had to continue together till about eleven o'clock. . . . This was a meeting very similar to some of the Lord's most gracious visits at Kilsyth and Dundee. Praise and glory to his matchless name!

"*Monday, December 30th*, 1839.—From two to three hundred were present at one o'clock; a solemn season; separated about four. Evening; an immensely crowded audience in the Gaelic Church; subject, Isaiah liv. 5, first clause; much aided; great solemnity; some in tears. After the blessing spoke a little to some that lingered; much affected. I was pressed by them to go into the session-house. It was overflowing; all in tears nearly. Sang, read, spoke and prayed for an hour—they would not go; Mr. Stewart concluded with prayer, the tears were standing in his eyes; indeed it was an affecting scene!

"*December 31st*, 1839, forenoon.—Meeting at one, a few hundreds present; Mr. Cumming, who had promptly answered our call for aid, began. I then followed upon Psalm cx. 3; a solemn meeting; when it was ended the vestry was filled with

weepers, with whom we had to pray and sing a long time. Evening in Mr. Turnbull's church, at seven o'clock; subject, Matthew xi. 28; dense crowd. Meeting at ten o'clock in St. Leonard's Church, to bring in the New Year. We all took part in the service, Mr. Cumming first, Mr. Milne second, and myself third; we separated about one o'clock on the New Year's morning; a sweet season. I never brought in the New Year so sweetly before.

"*Wednesday, January 1st*, 1840.—Meeting forenoon from eleven to four; Mr. Cumming, Mr. Milne, and myself officiated.

"*Friday, January 3d*, 1840.—Meeting in the forenoon in Kinnoul Street Church, Mr. Bonar of Collace present, and officiated along with Mr. Milne, Mr. Turnbull, and myself. We met with many interesting cases in the vestry. I went off to Dundee at four o'clock, and left Mr. Bonar to officiate in the evening. He preached to a most densely crowded audience in St. Leonard's Church, from the Ethiopian eunuch; Mr. Milne also spoke, and it is said to have been a most solemn season, not a few in tears.

"*Sabbath, January 5th*, 1840, forenoon.—Sat in St. Leonard's, Mr. Milne on the barren fig-tree. Afternoon, I preached in Mr. Gray's on Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 1st clause. Evening, in Dr. Findlay's immense church, from 2 Cor. v. 21; very much aided in exposition and application; densely crowded; thousands went away, I am told, without getting in. Glory to the Lamb!"

Prayer, temptation, and deep humiliation of soul, as usual, prepared the way for more abounding joy and strength:—

"*Friday, January 10th*, 1840.—In the evening I spoke from Romans v. 1, but felt much straitened, and was so filled with self-complacency, vain elation, and spiritual blindness, that I had to stop in a very short time and felt called on to tell the people that I believed, and had been made to feel for

some days, that unless we were humbled under God's mighty hand and the people ceased from their idolatrous confidence in instruments and looked more to God alone, I was convinced his work would not go on, &c.

"*Saturday, January 11th*, 1840.—I was alone during the greater part of the day seeking humiliation before the Lord, and began through grace to discover how far, alas! I have fallen from that contrition of soul for sin which I once enjoyed. Lord, I am indeed set in slippery places. Lord, humble me and keep me from falling into the snare of the devil!

"*Sabbath, January 12th*, 1840, afternoon.—Preached in Mr. Gray's from Romans xii. 1, with some degree of brokenness of heart and comfort in the Lord. Evening, preached in Dr. Findlay's from Ephesians iv. 30, on the work of the Holy Spirit. It was a solemn season, an immense assembly. I had great liberty, especially in pressing sinners not to resist the Holy Ghost. Dr. Findlay was with me in the pulpit. . . ."

Here, as elsewhere, and perhaps even more than often elsewhere, he was, in the most emphatic sense, instant in season and out of season, never deeming any place or time unsuitable in which a word might be spoken for his Master, and an effort made to win the life of souls. The highways and hedges, the river steamboat, the roadside inn, the mart of business, the purlieus and haunts of vice and crime, were to him, equally with the crowded church or upper chamber, the fit arena in which to fulfil his divine ambassadorship, and "compel men to come in" to the house of God. The following incident is strikingly illustrative of this, as well as of the pervasive influence of the movement in the Perth community at this time, and the unlikely quarters into which it found its way:—

"*January 16th*, 1840.—In the evening I met a great many young men in the vestry, and found among them a great number of interesting cases. At eight o'clock I visited the prayer-meeting of females in Miss Ramsay's, which was very full and interesting. Coming out I saw behind a public-house some men and women sporting themselves, and went up and said, 'You are making work for the day of judgment.' They all ran in except one young man, a son of the housekeeper; he was subdued. I asked him if he would allow me to go in and pray. I got into a large room; many assembled, and we had a very solemn meeting. They all promised to come out to the meetings at parting."

The sequel appears in a brief entry about a fortnight after:—

"*January 30th*, 1840.—When I went home Mr. Milne told me he had heard that Mr. L., the public-house keeper, in whose house I was so remarkably led in God's providence to hold a meeting, had given intimation to his landlord that he was going to give up his shop at the next term, and to leave the spirit-trade. . . . Praise to the Lord!

The power indeed that attended his words, and the effects which often in the most unexpected quarters followed them, was at this time most remarkable. "I never thought," exclaimed a strong, careless man, who had heard him, "to have been so much affected; it is surely something altogether unearthly that has come to the town." Another "had come with a companion to our meetings one night to mock, and they both did so, and went from the church to a public-house. However he would not go in, refusing with an awful oath to do so. On his death-bed he called for his companion, and asked him if he remembered these things. He replied he did.

'Well,' he says, 'I would give a thousand worlds to-night that my soul were in the state his is.' He died after he said these words!"

On Sabbath the 19th he was at the communion at Dundee, when he had the solemn joy of sitting down at the table of the Lord, "along with many dear believers, not a few of them his own children in the Lord," but immediately afterwards returned to his work in Perth, which seemed still steadily to grow in depth and widespread influence:—

"*Sabbath, February 9th*, 1840, afternoon.—Preached in Mr. Turnbull's to a crowded audience, from John iii. 14, 15. I felt under the bonds of unbelief during the chief part of the discourse, but towards the close was enabled by the Lord fairly to break loose and speak with some degree of faith and joy in Emmanuel, especially when insisting on the stronger grounds for faith in our case than in the case of the Israelites. They were called to look to a piece of brass as a saviour, and thus their looking was an act simply based on the divine *word;* but we are called by the same divine word to look for life not to an object of no intrinsic power or value, but to the most glorious Object in the universe, the Son of God purchasing the church on the cross with his own blood, &c. I saw several persons in tears; I was weeping myself, and found this a blessed time. Praise to the Lord!—Evening: the crowd was so great seeking to get into St. Leonard's Church, that it was supposed there were more collected in the street an hour before the time than would have several times filled the church. The press was so great when the doors were opened, that several persons were somewhat injured. I preached from Romans x. 4, and felt considerably aided; though to myself the season was not quite so sweet as in the afternoon. We prayed particularly for the raising up of Jewish missionaries, according to the call of the Jewish Com-

mittee by circular, and prayed that some of those present, if it were the Lord's will, might be called to this glorious work.

"*Monday, February 10th*, 1840.—The day of Queen Victoria's marriage. Last night about eleven o'clock Agnes S——, Miss R——, and two other females, called to express their regret that no advantage had been taken of the cessation from labour on this day for advancing the glory of Jesus. I had amid so many engrossing duties never thought that this was the day, and it had escaped Mr. Milne also. We prayed together on the subject. . . . . I met the people of God and many inquirers at half-past twelve, and we continued together till three. I spoke upon Colossians iii. I met with several people during the day; walked with Mr. Milne distributing many tracts, and having many interesting conversations with persons on the road.—Evening: there was to be a grand display of fireworks on the Inch, and we hardly thought that the church would be anything like filled. However, it was quite full, and after a time not a few were standing. I spoke upon the 45th Psalm, commenting on the glory of the Bridegroom Emmanuel, and the privileges of the Bride the Lamb's wife, and thus enforcing the divine call, 'Hearken, O daughter, and consider,' &c. I felt much of the Lord's presence, and had a full persuasion from the frame of the hearers that some, if not many, were in the act of being betrothed to Christ for ever in righteousness, and judgment, and loving-kindness, &c., Hosea ii.; and while we were thus celebrating in the British dominions the marriage of our beloved sovereign, I trust there was joy in the presence of the angels of God over sinners espoused to the Lamb. How infinitely does the one event transcend the other in importance and glory! and yet, alas! this poor world, blinded by Satan, extols the one and despises the other. . . . . Awake, O gracious Lord, awake this sleeping world! Amen.

"*February 28th*, 1840, evening.—We had a very large and solemn meeting. I concluded the exposition of Hosea xiv., and then spoke of the nature of the duties for to-morrow

(appointed among us along with some of the people at Dundee, Kilsyth, Dunfermline, and Stanley, as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer), and also of the reasons for the appointment of this day.

"*March 1st*, 1840.—We had this day a solemn fast, kept by many I have no doubt very strictly, as far as the duty of abstinence is concerned. We met at two o'clock P.M. I spoke upon the exercises appropriate to this day:—

"1. Self-examination in order to the discovery of sin—of the heart and nature as well as of the tongue and life—by the law and the Spirit of Jehovah. 2. Humbling the soul before God under sins discovered. 3. Confession of sin, full and particular, free and filial. 4. Penitent turning from all sin. 5. Entering into the covenant of grace by the receiving of Emmanuel and the surrender of the soul to him and to God through him. 6. Special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon this city, and the other places united with us in this fast—the great end designed in its appointment. There was very great solemnity.—Evening: we met again in Mr. Turnbull's church, Kinnoul Street, and concluded the subject. I had at this time more melting of heart under a sense of the love of God than ever I remember to have had in the pulpit, and I think shed more tears than ever before in preaching. The people also seemed in an unusually tender and solemn frame. Glory to the Lamb!

"*March 10th*, morning.—Alone, and writing letters, especially to the young people attending Miss Haldane's Greenside School. While writing this letter, and speaking of the interposition of Jehovah-Jesus between the wrath of God and sinners, I got a view of the glory of this mystery surpassing anything I had ever enjoyed before, and the tears fell plentifully from my dry eyes."

Amid these abounding and exhausting labours in a sphere in which so wide and effectual a door had been opened to him, he still found time and strength for occa-

sional evangelistic excursions amid the villages around, the results of which were often deeply interesting. In this way he visited at different times during this period the parishes of Auchtermuchty, Strathmiglo, Dunfermline, Muthil, Stanley, Auchtergaven, Caputh, Kinfauns, &c. One or two notices of these more desultory, but not less fruitful labours may be given, as examples of what, for several years to come, constituted a large and important part of his work. Thus, of date February 18th, 1840, he writes:—

"*Tuesday, February 18th*, 1840, forenoon.—In closet, wrote several letters, drove out to Stanley in gig, gave tracts to all by the way; well received.—Afternoon, with Mr. Mather the minister, and chiefly in closet; a humbling season.—Evening: immense crowd in the spacious church; a thousand people work in the mills—subject, Luke xxiv. 47; more aided than ever on the same subject. A very solemn season; many met me deeply affected as I retired. Walked home to Perth seven miles, arriving at half-past twelve, accompanied by nearly twenty from Perth; men, women, and children seemed all very solemn and heavenly in their demeanour; prayed before we parted.

"*February 25th*, 1840.—I drove out to Balbiggie to preach in the Secession Church. The man who drove me seems very like a Christian, and told me that of late, especially since our meetings began, there had been an astonishing change on the face of the country round in point of morality and anxiety about religion; on the way out all the people came to their doors with a great appearance of anxiety, and I gave away many tracts. The hour of meeting was six; the people were many of them assembled at two o'clock, and at half-past four, when I went, the church was full. I preached on Psalm cx. 3, and had considerable assistance, feeling much joy in my own soul, &c.

"*March 19th*.—(Returning from Auchtergaven.) We made

up on the way to the Stanley people, a great crowd, and I knelt down with them at the roadside under the bright moon and prayed. Their love and deep solemnity put me much in mind of the first Christians. After singing and pronouncing the blessing, we parted in affecting silence!

"*Sabbath, March 22d*, 1840.—I rose this morning strong in body, but with much conscious deadness of soul, and awfully assaulted, as I *often* am, by doubts regarding every truth of God in his Word. I preached in the church from Matthew xi. 28, and had little enlargement in the exposition of the text, feeling still an inward struggle with infidelity. However, after I had closed the Bible, and was concluding with a few words of exhortation, the Lord gave me the victory over unbelief, and I had such an impressive realization of the state of the unconverted, that I was enabled to speak very closely to their consciences, and beseech them with *all* my heart to awake from the sleep of death and flee to Jesus for refuge. I saw the tears starting from the eyes of some men advanced in years, and felt that the Lord was indeed present. The meeting lasted three hours and a half. After dinner, Mr. Maclagan,[1] who was very kind, pressed me to come again, saying that a number of his people had been benefited by our meetings in Perth."

The period of his continuous ministry in Perth was now drawing to a close. He had received repeated and urgent invitations to visit Aberdeen, the scene of his second home, and of his college days, which he was unable any longer to resist, and he felt at the same time that he had already remained in Perth long enough to fulfil the functions of a distinctively evangelistic ministry. What further work

[1] The Rev. James Maclagan, minister of Kinfauns, afterwards Professor of Divinity in the Free Church College, Aberdeen—a man of great learning, elevated piety, and spiritual depth and fulness of thought.

remained to be done in order to turn to the best account the powerful impulse that had been given, was more of a pastoral than of a missionary kind, and that work he felt was abundantly safe in the hands of Mr. Milne, Mr. Gray, and the other brethren with whom it had been his privilege and delight to labour throughout the whole course of those eventful days. The sacred spring-tide, however, flowed on with unabated force to the last, and he closes, immediately before leaving Perth, the first year of his ministry as a preacher of the gospel, and the twenty-fifth year of his earthly life, in a sort of solemn "triumph in Christ," who still continued in so remarkable a manner to make manifest through him the savour of his saving knowledge and grace.

"I drove home, praying all the way, and after an hour alone I went to the church (St. Leonard's) at six with clear direction to Deuteronomy xxxii. 35 as my subject. The church was as usual a solid mass of living beings. I availed myself of many hints in Edwards' sermon, proceeding in the following order:—I took the whole verse as my subject and considered, I. What was meant by vengeance, recompense, and calamity, the things that are coming on the wicked; which, copying Edwards in his application, I opened up in three particulars: 1st. It is the wrath of Jehovah. 2d. The fierceness of his wrath. 3d. The fierceness of Jehovah's wrath for eternity. II. In the second place, I put the question, What is it that defers this wrath till the due time, the day of calamity? in other words, what is it that keeps an unconverted sinner a moment out of hell? To this it was answered, Negatively, 1st. It is not divine justice. This has already sentenced the sinner to eternal wrath. 2d. It is not that God is pleased with the sinner; on the contrary, he is awfully angry with him, and in many cases more angry

than with many that are already in hell. 3d. It is not on account of anything that the sinner has done, or is doing, or intends to do. 4th. It is not on account of a good bodily constitution or great care to preserve life on the part of the sinner or other persons on his behalf. 5th. It is not on account of any promise given by God to the unconverted. But, Positively, Sinners are kept out of hell from moment to moment only by the long-suffering of God, who 'endures with much long-suffering,' &c. I then came to apply the subject to the case of the unconverted, and went on to point out that they were suspended by the hand of a long-suffering God over the pit of hell, and were yet madly hating and resisting that God, and provoking him to let them go and fall into the flames, especially by rejecting Jesus his unspeakable gift. These statements appeared to be accompanied with an extraordinary measure of the Holy Ghost, and the feeling of the hearers became so intense that when one man in the gallery passage audibly exclaimed, 'Lord Jesus, come and save me,' the great mass of the congregation gave audible expression to their emotion in a universal wailing. I immediately changed the theme, and began, as at Kilsyth, to repeat such invitations as Isaiah lv., pressing Jesus on all as God's free gift. After a few minutes the great multitude became more composed; but as I went on particularly addressing those who continued impenitent spectators, the feeling became again as deep and general as before. To me, looking from the pulpit, the whole body of the people seemed bathed in tears, old as well as young, men equally with women. This second display of feeling continued a few minutes and gradually ended, a few only here and there throughout the church continuing in great and visible distress of soul. When the impression became so deep and overpowering, many that did not like, or did not understand, such a glorious manifestation of the divine power, were offended, and one man came up the stair of the pulpit and asked me to dismiss the people! After I had prayed and sung with the people a considerable

time beyond the usual period, with brief addresses interspersed, I pronounced the blessing, and asked them to disperse, promising to meet with any who might wish further prayer and direction in a school-house. Hardly any, however, would go away, and even after all the lights in the church but two had been one by one extinguished, a few hundreds still remained in the church, who would not, and in some cases could not, retire. Mr. Milne arrived when it was nearly ten o'clock, and we found it necessary again to sing and pray. After we had done so we at last got the people away. I went down to Miss Ramsay's school, and there met with as many as the house and passage would contain, both men and women, though chiefly the latter, all in deep distress about their souls, and in most cases in tears. I remained for an hour, and then left them all to pray and sing together, which they continued to do for some time longer. This glorious night seemed to me at the time, and appears from all I have since heard, to have been perhaps the most wonderful that I have ever seen, with the exception perhaps of the first Tuesday at Kilsyth. There was this difference chiefly between the two occasions, that a great many of those affected at this time had been convinced or converted during the previous weeks, while at Kilsyth almost all but the established children of God were awakened for the first time. Glory to the Lamb! This is the last Sabbath of the first year of my ministry as an ambassador of Christ! To the praise and glory of infinite, eternal, free and sovereign mercy and grace. Praise the Lord! . . .

"*March 28th*, 1840.—When during this day I tried to be grateful to the Lord for all the marvellous work that I have seen during the year that was closing, I felt my soul almost overwhelmed, and could only think with joy on the subject, when I remembered that I had an eternity to spend in praising and blessing God. Praise to the Lamb! infinite, eternal praise; mercy sovereign, infinite, unchangeable, everlasting! The Father electing, the Son redeeming, the Spirit renewing.

"'To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
The God whom I adore,
Be glory, as it was, and is,
And shall be evermore!'

"*Wednesday, April 1st*, 1840.—This day begins my 26th year. I would act for the Lord Jesus henceforth as if I had hitherto done absolutely nothing in his service. May He enable me. I spent the morning alone and in fasting. The Lord, I trust, was near, though I cannot say that I spent the season in a manner befitting such an occasion. Indeed, I can hardly dare to think of God's dealings with me. They overwhelm my soul with astonishment. I wait for *eternity* to study and admire and extol them."

Such were those remarkable days at Perth during the spring of 1840, as their history is traced in the simple and solemn words of the chief actor himself. It may be desirable, however, for a moment to look at those scenes as seen by another eye; and this we are enabled to do through the following interesting recollections kindly furnished to me by one who herself "owed much in after-life" to the sacred impressions received at that memorable time. Of the after and permanent results of the work then done we shall afterwards have occasion to speak; what we have now to quote refers rather to the immediate aspect of the movement while still in progress, as it presented itself to one who lived through it and deeply shared its spirit:—

"It was in a hotel in Rome that we first read, in the columns of *Galignani's Messenger*, the name of William Burns. The article was a bitter and sneering caricature. Returning to Scotland a few weeks later, without having had any opportunity of being in church in the interval, and with the bewitching mummeries of the Roman Church, as they surrounded

the person of Gregory XVI., in vivid recollection, we were taken to an inquirers' meeting, conducted by Mr. Burns in Perth; and the thirty years which have since sped away, instead of effacing, have only deepened the impression of the scene we then witnessed. William Burns was speaking from Revelation xix., of the doom of Antichrist, and the hallelujah which shall rise from the redeemed when the smoke of her torment shall ascend in their sight. He was warning the unsaved that over their destruction also the same assenting 'Amen, hallelujah,' must yet arise, if they persisted in rejecting Jesus. He was inviting poor sinners to come to Calvary's fountain and wash and be clean. He was warning such as imagined they had washed and were living unholily, thus: 'You are saying, 'If I sin it will easily be washed out again.' Or, if not *saying* it with the lip, you are acting it out fearfully in the life. Ah! the soul that has washed its filthy garments in the stream of Calvary is careful how the remedy is used. Many believers have so much allowed the stains of conformity to the world to disfigure the white robe, that instead of representing the work of God within, they are scarcely to be distinguished from the servants of the devil.' He was setting before believers the coming joys of the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and said, 'This blessedness is not so far off as the world seems to think; the meanest saint can tell that it has already set in with a sweetness unspeakable. Ushered into the breast of many by billows of affliction and temptation, beating wildly on the soul with their tempestuous swell, yet are the beginnings so glorious and so blessed, that they are an earnest of a springing up of a life eternal in the heavens. On the joys which shall crown our union with Emmanuel no destroyer shall lay the withering blight of his death-cold hand; no ruthless separation shall snatch our happiness from us, or us from our happiness. After washing for a few days more in the free fountain here—after a few days more weeping on account of sin and sorrow—you shall awake suddenly in the city of our God, to walk with Emmanuel for ever in the courts

above. The company, small here, will be innumerable yonder. Ten thousand times ten thousand are their voices, and ten thousand times ten thousand are the harps they tune; but it is as the sounding of *one* voice. Hallelujah! 'tis the key-note of an eternal song. Only *one* name rests upon their lips, it is Emmanuel. They know but *one* song, the song of the redeemed. It is sometimes difficult to say here '*all* his judgments are righteous,' for they are often heavy and severe. When you join that company, your narrow and short-sighted views will be gone. If I were ever to see the smoke of your torment ascending before the throne, I would have to say Amen; hallelujah! and if you, standing on high, were to see the smoke of my torment ascending, you too would cry Amen; hallelujah! . . . An hour has nearly elapsed since we began to speak with you; it is just taking wing; a few seconds and it will have fled to bear its tale to the judgment-seat. Shall it announce the submission of a sinner, the return of a prodigal, the adoption of a son into the family above?' The deepest solemnity pervaded the assembly, as the simple searching truth was calmly presented. Individuals were conversed with in St. Leonard's Church for an hour or two afterwards; and many a burden was there laid upon 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' These inquiry-meetings were held three times a week, and in the evening the church was open for the crowds that thronged it from town and country. An hour before the time of service every seat was filled. The multitude generally remained in silence, and many heads were bowed in prayer. The stairs leading to the pulpit were also filled, and it was with difficulty the preacher could be conducted thither. The Rev. John Milne, the recently settled pastor of the congregation, usually shared the pulpit with the speaker. We recall especially one evening when a chair was handed up for James Hamilton, then of Abernyte, to sit at their side. It seems now as if one chariot had sufficed to carry home the three, 'William Burns, John Milne, and James Hamilton.' That night was one of power.

'Tough boughs require sharp pruning,' said the preacher, when some one would have tried to blunt the knife, by advising him to the use of more measured and tempered language. 'A sleeping minister and a sleeping congregation, what will they do in the day of judgment?' He was privileged to break this sleep—in congregations, in kirk-sessions, and in manses. The first part of his discourse always embodied a mass of telling doctrine, holding up the divine law right in face of the sinner's conscience. The appeals in the latter part were irresistibly winning, brimming over with the freely offered love of Jesus. The Spirit was glorified. He arrested many before the preacher had time to enter his subject; in some cases the arrow sped from the first psalm that was given out, and many were awakened during the opening prayer. It is not easy to describe his prayers. Adoration of Jehovah's uncreated glory, as it falls on the darkness and corruption of man's heart, and reveals the abyss of a yawning hell, filled the first part. He brought himself and the saved part of his audience down into the sides of the pit whence they were hewn, in a way that made the greatest outcast in the church feel that he or she was sympathized with and carried abreast; and then his soul would as it were be seen to pass anew through the cleansing flood, up into the very presence-chamber of the King of kings, and there looked up into the Father's face with unutterable love. His theology was unbiased, and swung like a pendulum across the truth of God, avoiding all limited, classified, partial, and one-sided expressions of it. His training of young converts was thus invaluable to them. 'No cross, no crown,' was the term of enlistment. 'Suffering is the law of the kingdom.' 'The greater your sacrifices for Christ, the more of his joy will fill your heart.' 'Forsake the glass, the dance, and the song, if you would drink of the rivers of his pleasures, if you would leap for joy on the shores of Emmanuel's land, if you would take up the unending hallelujah.'

"He warned the young that if they would live near the

Lord, they must be content to be singular even among believers, and to travel sometimes almost alone. 'I am often reminded of this,' he said, 'when setting out by the early stage-coach. The morning is sharp, companions few, and from the top of the coach you see whole streets shuttered in as in the night. But just here and there, one, earlier up than others, has begun her morning work, with no one apparently to notice or thank her. She will find out the good of it before nightfall. So with you. Forget the crowd, walk with God alone.'

"It was a high standard he himself set before them. 'The longing of my heart would be to go once all round the world before I die, and preach one gospel invitation in the ear of every creature.' He had a tender regard for those who were kept long in darkness: saying, that those to whom the Lord had revealed much of their own sin and misery in the place of dragons, were often led into high places in the school of Christ.

"All the roads from the town were nightly trod by groups of country hearers. Some were returning home to sing for the first time the new song. Others with heavy pace carried an arrow rankling in the heart. Others bore the good news of companions in town turning to God, the public-house signs taken down, the police comparatively idle, and families and workshops sharing the wide-spread blessing."

In the words, in fine, of Mr. Milne, used a year and a half afterwards, on a retrospect of these remarkable scenes: "God's people quickened; backsliders restored; the doubting and uncertain brought to decision and assurance; hidden ones who for years had walked solitarily brought to light, and united to a family of brothers and sisters; a large number of the worldly, thoughtless, ignorant, self-righteous turned to the Lord; a peculiar people growing up, who are separate from the world, know and love one

another; watch over, exhort, and aid one another, and seem to grow in humility and zeal;"[1] such is the summary history of the work done and the fruits of blessing gathered in at Perth during this signal "time of power."

After a few more days spent in fulfilling some country engagements, he started for Aberdeen on the 7th, amid a crowd of loving friends who had assembled to bid him farewell; but rejoicing still more to see, as he passed through Bridgend, "that William G——'s sign as a spirit-seller was taken down!"

[1] Evidence supplied to the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, in answer to queries proposed by them, October 25, 1841. See *Life of Rev. John Milne*, p. 55.

CHAPTER VII.

1840.

LABOURS AT ABERDEEN.

THE ample details which have been given in the three last chapters from Mr. Burns' own journals, of the nature of his labours, and the scenes amongst which he mingled, at Kilsyth, Dundee, and Perth, will render it unnecessary to give such extended extracts with reference to his evangelistic work at Aberdeen. The spirit in which he laboured, and the results which followed, were here in all essential respects identical with what we have just described elsewhere, and might be said to be simply the continuation of what was there begun. The same unresting activity, intense earnestness, and vivid realization of the unseen world on the part of the preacher—the same mighty and gradually swelling tide of interest, inquiry, irrepressible emotion, on the part of the throngs that waited on his ministry and hung upon his lips—were here as there the salient features of a movement which was the subject of solemn joy to one part of the community, and of wonder, consternation, scorn, or anxious misgiving to the other. Sermons to densely crowded audiences in three several churches on each Lord's-day; prayer-meetings in the morning and afternoon, and a public address in the

evening of each week-day, with generally an additional hour of counsel, instruction, and prayer, for those whose intense anxiety still detained them after the long service was over, with words by the wayside and conferences with inquirers and young disciples at all other available hours, constituted the daily history of his work, so far as it can be written by man, for weeks together. An occasional sermon, too, in the open air—in Castle Street, or at the foot of the Barrack Hill—startled and scandalized a Christian community, which has since seen the same self-denying service done, with no other feeling than that of admiration, by so many others. Even his brethren in the ministry, who in all other respects approved and furthered his work, with one single exception deprecated a course which all the existing conventions condemned, but which, by its remarkable results, in sounding the depths of a class of society which no other agency had reached, more than justified itself:—

"In the evening," says he, "I (April 26) preached in Castle Street to an immense audience, chiefly men, on the willingness of Jesus to save the chief of sinners, from the 'thief on the cross.' I felt more of the divine presence than on any former occasion in Aberdeen, and laboured to pull sinners out of the fire. The impression was very deep; many weeping, some screaming, and one or two quite overpowered. At eight o'clock we adjourned to the North Church, where Mr. Wilson from Belfast was preaching, and when he had concluded we remained with a crowded audience for another hour in exhortation, prayer, and praise. After this we dismissed the people; but a great many were so deeply moved that we could not get away, and accordingly I returned with Mr. Murray, who addressed along with me about four

hundred, from the precentor's desk. After prayer and singing, we dismissed about ten o'clock. Getting with difficulty out of the crowd, I went down to Albion Street, and addressed in a school-room about seventy of the poorest and vilest of the people in that degraded district. They were very solemn and interested to all appearance. We separated about eleven. Though this was a day of uncommon toil, yet, praise to the Lord! I was not worn out, but felt strong as ever on my way home. . . . . I may here record that none of the ministers were in favour of the street-preaching but Mr. Parker. He and his session all went to Castle Street; though I felt that I did not need human countenance, having so clear a conviction of the duty, and being so conscious of the divine support in this effort to advance the glory of Jesus."

Other tokens besides the immediate sense of the "divine support," and the access opened to him to "the poorest and vilest of the people," soon appeared to confirm his conviction that he was in this matter in the right line of action. "When walking on the links," says he in his journal of next day, "in the afternoon I met some poor lads, with whom I prayed among the sand-banks. They were very serious for the time, and one of them said he had been in Albion Street school the night before. He said that many were praying for the first time, and he among the rest, after I went away." We are not surprised, accordingly, to find him soon again on the same battle-ground, renewing the charge from the same point at which he had already effected so wide a breach. The scruples of his brethren, too, soon gave way, as they witnessed and gladly hailed the good results of the bolder course from which at first they had shrunk:—

"*Tuesday, April 28th.*—In the evening I preached, to

an *immense* audience at the foot of the Barrack Hill, including multitudes of the worst people in the town. I was hoarse and the situation was very unfavourable, owing to its vicinity to the public road; yet with all these disadvantages the audience were most fixed and solemn in their attention, and I was encouraged to intimate a similar meeting in the same vicinity for Thursday night, though I had previously proposed to leave Aberdeen on the afternoon of that day. This afternoon I had also at half-past five a meeting in the barracks with about thirty of the soldiers. They seemed much impressed, and some of them shed tears when I came away. . . .

"*Wednesday, April 29th.*—I preached in the evening in Holborn Church; an *immense* audience, the result of the out-door preaching, as Mr. Mitchell granted with good-will, his mind seeming to be a good deal changed on this point. Mr. M., Mr. Parker, and Dr. Dewar all took part in the services.

"*Thursday, April 30th.*—I was again at the barracks in the afternoon; appearances just such as on the former day. I preached thereafter at the foot of the Barrack Hill to an immense audience. I had been thinking on the subject of conversion, but I was led in the time of the opening prayer to think of Matthew xi. 28, and I preached on it with perhaps more of the divine assistance than I had done at any time before. Towards the end especially, many were screaming and in tears. . . . I felt as if I could pull men out of the fire; indeed, I never had more of this feeling than this evening, and on Sabbath evening in Castle Street. In order to escape the crowd I slipped into the barracks, and after walking up and down in concealment a little, I went up to some of the men and spoke to them of Jesus and salvation. I got a good many of them to come and have a last prayer-meeting before our parting, which we had accordingly. When going up to the room I met dear J. C.[1] standing with

[1] An interesting convert mentioned in the journal before several times.

streaming eyes alone. He had run up Union Street, thinking to overtake me, but not seeing me, and being obliged to be in by nine o'clock, he returned disconsolate, thinking that he might never see me again, the regiment being to leave Aberdeen for Paisley on Tuesday first. Our meeting was sweet indeed, and our parting affecting, but full of the hope of meeting in the presence of the Lamb. Glory to his matchless name!"

Of the after-history of individual souls amongst those neglected multitudes in Albion Street and Barrack Hill, to whom the gates of the eternal kingdom were thus opened for once at least, so widely, but few and broken fragments can be gathered from the records of earth. The names of some of them occur in connection with the labours of a committee of inquiry soon after appointed by the presbytery of the bounds, and the cases of others are doubtless well known to individual ministers of the city, under whose ministry the seeds of life then sown were cherished and ripened to holy fruitfulness. With his friends amongst the soldiers, however, he was destined to meet again in other and deeply interesting circumstances, when, five years afterwards, they rallied round him, and acted as his gallant body-guard amid the rude assaults of the ruffianly mob at Montreal.

Throughout these manifold and arduous labours Mr. Burns had enjoyed, as ever afterwards in Aberdeen, the valuable countenance and co-operation of several of the ministers of the city, and particularly of Dr. Murray of the North Parish, Mr. Parker of Bonaccord Church, and Mr. Mitchell of Holborn, in one or other of whose churches most of his meetings both on Sabbaths and on week-days

were held. The two former have since died—leaving behind them the rich savour of a revered and blessed memory. Mr. Parker was a man of deep, thoughtful, and even severe piety, with peculiarly profound and solemn views of the holy law and sovereign grace of God—who had been recently translated to his present charge from a chapel in Dundee, where he had laboured for several years with remarkable acceptance and success. Dr. Murray was a ripe scholar, a sound divine, a brave and godly man, and especially during his earlier ministry, in Trinity Chapel, a stirring and successful preacher. He lived to a good old age, and passed away amid the universal respect of a community that had for long years honoured him as one of its most worthy and true-hearted citizens. Both loved and befriended the young evangelist with that peculiar and beautiful affection which one sometimes sees in those of more advanced years towards the young.

On Tuesday, May 1, he left Aberdeen for a season, in order to fulfil some other pressing engagements—thus briefly summing up the result of his labours there during the past month:—

"I am now come to the end of my sojourn in Aberdeen, and must notice a few general features in what met my eye and ear. We had meetings every morning to the end, in Bonaccord Church, which were very sweet and solemn, and increased in size towards the end. I also continued to meet almost every afternoon, from one to three, with anxious inquirers. Many that came to these meetings, as well as many that called at the house, seemed in a most promising state, and altogether, upon a review of all I saw of this kind in Aberdeen, there seemed to be very hopeful symptoms of

an extensive awakening. And now, Lord Jesus, grant me and all thy people there, the Holy Ghost as a Spirit of praise for all the tokens of thy glorious and gracious presence there; and may those who were impressed by thy power not be left to fall back into their former security beneath the abiding wrath of God, but be brought to wash in thy blood, and put on the glorious wedding-garment of thy righteousness, and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour by a life and conversation becoming the gospel; and to thee be all the glory! Amen."

His retirement from Aberdeen, however, was only temporary. Neither in his own judgment nor in that of the brethren who had laboured with him, had he yet made full proof of his ministry there; and accordingly, after an absence of five months, we find him again in the field, prosecuting with equal devotedness and zeal, and with even still more remarkable results, the work which he had before begun. For two months together, on week-days and Sabbath-days, the attendance at the meetings continued unabated, and the number of inquirers increased. I find on one of the last pages of his Aberdeen diary specific mention of the 200th case of spiritual anxiety with which he had had to deal since the commencement of his visit; and those who sought him out on this errand, and with whom he was able to converse, were of course only a fraction of those who were more or less affected by the general and wide-spread impression. So great at one time was the number of the anxious, that appointments made for their special behoof would be responded to by such crowds, that individual instruction became impossible, and the inquirers' meeting

grew into a congregation. Meanwhile the intensity of feeling manifested by those who were the more especial subjects of the movement was often very great, and found vent to itself in the case of those who were of a more impressible nature, and were least habituated to self-control, now in silent weeping, and now in loud sobs and cries. There was undoubtedly at this time a good deal of what is called religious excitement. The solemn impressions of eternal things renewed night after night, in crowded congregations composed in large measure of the same individuals, and under the spell of a voice that seemed as if the very echo of eternity, gradually grew to an intensity which became at last altogether uncontrollable; and as this aspect of the movement attracted a good deal of public notoriety at the time, and formed the subject of a special inquiry on the part of the presbytery of the bounds, it may be right to give one or two extracts illustrative of its nature:—

"*October 22d.*—In the evening I preached in Trinity Church at seven to a full church, from the Pharisee and the publican. The impression was solemn. At an after-meeting a great many remained, and the impression became deeper, many being in tears. We parted at ten, but as we were leaving the session-house many crowded round us, and one mill-girl cried aloud, so that I had to return to the session-house with the concourse. The place was filled in a few moments, and almost all fell on their knees and began to pray to the Lord. I continued to pray and sing and speak with these until after twelve o'clock, having frequently offered to let them go, but finding that they would not move, and feeling in my own soul that the Lord was indeed in the midst of us. This was the most glorious season, I think,

that I have yet seen in Aberdeen. Many poor sinners lay weeping all the night on their knees in prayer, and some of the Lord's people present seemed to be filled with joy.

"*October 23d.*—In the evening I met from three to four hundred in the Albion Street school, chiefly mill-girls, and spoke chiefly from the beginning of Luke xv. I was enabled to speak very awfully of the lost state of sinners, and the enormity of many sins abounding among us at one particular time; and the impression was so great that almost all were in tears, and *many* cried aloud. This impression seemed so deep and genuine, that it continued the whole evening afterwards, and though I dismissed them three or four times, hardly any would go away, the greater part crying aloud at the mention of dispersing. Accordingly we remained until after eleven, and even then the greater part remained behind me, and the beadle could not get some of them away for a long time after this. It was indeed to all appearance a night of the Lord's power, and I trust a night of salvation to some.

"*October 28th*, evening.—I met with anxious inquirers in the North Church session-house, but so many came (they could not be fewer than two hundred and fifty) that we had to go to the church; of these two-thirds were mill-girls. After speaking to them all together until half-past nine, I kept the mill-girls behind and took down about half of their names. Some of them seemed in the deep waters, and a great many were weeping silently. A few only seemed unmoved. I found that there were individuals among them from all the mills in town, as far as I am aware. Surely the Lord is dealing with some of these souls. I would not doubt it, though my past experience of the deceitfulness of almost all appearances makes me hesitate in regard to individual cases. At the Saturday evening meeting a good man who works in Hadden's mill told me that he had seen that day what he never saw before, a number of the workers bringing their Bibles with them to their work! Sweet token!

"*November 19th.*—At eight, Albion Street school; full attendance, though I did not intimate at the mills. What a sweet contrast the meeting presented at the time I came in to the appearance of these dear young people when we first met in this place! Glory to the Lord! The subject, 'Behold what manner of love,' &c. I desired to speak in an awakening way, which is my natural bent, but could not; and was enabled in some degree to speak for the comfort, examination, and instruction of those who are under concern. Many wept tenderly during the whole meeting. There was great solemnity and earnestness in prayer, and when we dismissed at a quarter past ten many were almost unable to go away. Indeed, a great number went into the lower schoolroom, in the dark, and remained there for a considerable time in prayer, Miss C., the excellent teacher of the infant school, being with them. I was told to-day by Mrs. M. that a person had said to her, though he was not particularly favourable, 'I am persuaded there is much good doing.' It is said that now on a Saturday night there is not one for ten that there used to be of these young women walking in the streets! Praise!

"*November 22d*, evening.—I preached for Mr. Foote in the East Church at six o'clock: a collection for his infant school. The sermon was therefore advertised. The church was *choked* as soon as opened. There could not be fewer than two thousand five hundred, a great number of whom were men. . . . I preached from Romans ii. 4, 5. At eight o'clock, I had to divide the subject in order to allow those to retire who needed. As many nearly came in as went out, and we continued till nine. I saw no *men* go away. There was a fixed and solemn attention to plain and momentous *truths* throughout, and some girls cried out. Praise to the Lord! . . . When I came out I heard a young man in the street, with a curse, saying, 'There is the rascal himself.' I went and spoke kindly to him, saying he did me no ill, but himself a great deal. He went along with me and spoke a

little more seriously, saying, 'Perhaps I'll turn to God too.' Turn him and he shall be turned. Praise!

"*November 23d*, evening.—At eight we met in the church Bonaccord with anxious inquirers, but in consequence of the movement so publicly seen on Saturday night, there were so many came as nearly to crowd the church, and among these many gentlemen drawn by curiosity. I read the 12th of Zechariah beginning with verse 9, and spoke upon it at first more textually, and afterwards with greater variety and latitude, and I obtained so great liberty that I spoke in a manner I have *hardly ever done before*. We remained speaking and praying until half-past eleven P.M., and hardly one even of the scoffers went away; many, even gentlemen, remained rivetted to the spot, evidently having a witness in their consciences to the truth. There were some avowed infidels present! Glory to the Lord! There would have been a great outcry among the young people, had I not at the beginning, and frequently as I went on, debarred them from crying out that others might hear and be benefited. Many sighed and wept aloud.

"*Wednesday, November 25th.*—Heard that the Dudhope Church is open to me at Dundee. At the prayer-meeting spoke on the last chapter of 1st Thessalonians. Tender weeping among many, nay almost all, when I intimated my proposed departure. We fixed Friday for a day of fasting. Oh! may it be indeed so. Many shook hands with me, young and old, *rich* ('not many') and poor, when I came out with tender weeping. Praise! Praise! Oh! may the week that remains to me here be pentecostal! Come Jesus! Amen."

It cannot certainly be matter of surprise that manifestations like these, occurring in the midst of a great Christian community, should have attracted a large measure of public attention, and should have been thought deserving of serious consideration and inquiry on the part of those

intrusted with authority in the church. They were sure to be variously, and by many severely, judged. Not only were those to whom every expression and sign of religious earnestness were but as the raving of fools sure to turn away from such scenes with contemptuous scorn, but even some, to whom the struggles of the interior life were a great and blessed reality, might question whether a spiritual movement, attended by such a tumult of emotion, were likely to prove in the highest degree solid or lasting. It was not that the spiritual concern of those whose souls were most powerfully stirred by the melting and thrilling words of the preacher was in itself too solemn or too deep. No amount of solicitude in regard to interests so stupendous as the favour and love of God, and the eternal life of the soul in him, could be regarded as either unreasonable or extreme. Of such solicitude, whether called by the name of excitement, or enthusiasm, or the awakening of the spiritual life, well might it be said with President Edwards: "If such things are enthusiasm or the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction." But the question still remained, whether a course of such *continuous* and *exhausting* excitement of the feelings were not fitted rather to hinder than to help spiritual inquiry in the highest sense—by preventing quiet thoughtfulness, and possibly issuing in a reaction of deeper carelessness and apathy. Grace, it was urged, while in itself supernatural and divine, yet works ever according to the

essential laws of our moral and physical constitution; and whatever in any degree runs counter to those laws must tend in that degree to hinder or to mar that work. Of those laws the healthy equipoise of the different elements of our nature—the reason, the conscience, the feelings—is one of the most fundamental, and therefore any undue or exclusive predominance of one of these to the suppression or abeyance of the others must tell with more or less of injurious influence upon all. It was alleged too that the excitement then prevalent was in many cases an excitement of fear rather than of love or moral feeling, and for that reason also the more liable to prove evanescent, or to issue in morbid and unsatisfactory results. It was not enough to say in answer to these considerations that the work was, as most Christian men fully believed, in its essential nature and substance a work of the Spirit of God; for a divine work was all the more sure to be more or less marred by the erring touch of man; and that work, it was maintained, would have been helped not hindered, and the spiritual birth or holy progress of souls furthered, had the public meetings and protracted and exciting services been fewer, and the hours of still and meditative retirement more.

There was some truth, doubtless, in these considerations; but probably not so much as those who urged them were disposed to think. It was not enough considered that such a season of general awakening to the sight and sense of eternal things was in its nature exceptional and temporary, and that the intense excitement with which it was at first attended was sure, in the course of nature, soon

to die down into a more quiet and tranquil condition of things. Whatever effects of a permanent kind might result from the earthquake shock, in startling souls from the sleep of death, its immediate tremor and concussion would soon pass away. Neither in the public mind generally, nor in the history of individual souls, would the tumult of emotion last long enough to produce, at least to the full extent, that revulsion or paralyzing exhaustion of feeling that was apprehended. Many of those who were most deeply moved by the prevailing influence very soon passed the crisis of their anxiety, and through that sore agony and travail of soul entered into a state of calm peace and rest in God, which was the very opposite of all tumultuous excitement. The same power that was mighty to wound was mighty also to heal, so that "the bones which" that divine unseen hand "had broken" were speedily made to "rejoice." There was the gentle and reviving south wind, as well as the biting north—the time of the singing of birds, as well as the winter and the rain. Thus those whose desires after God, the living God, were deep and real, did not long fail of the object of their quest, and with it of that holy calm which can alone effectually still the tumults of the heart; while in the case of those whose natural sensibilities alone were stirred, there was enough in the cares of the world and the pressing exigences of daily life soon to blunt the edge of excited feeling, and preclude the danger of a too intense or long-continued anxiety. Those in short who had then been roused to momentary seriousness, would either inevitably soon sink into slumber again, or have their eyes opened to the sight

of Him, the beholding of whom alone can permanently keep the soul awake, and in whom there is not only life everlasting but peace unspeakable.

It should be remembered, also, that those to whose benefit Mr. Burns' labours were at this time for the most part directed, belonged to that class whom it is most difficult to arouse to any thought or care about eternal things at all, and who when they *are* so roused, are then only led to think when they have been first made to feel. Those rude and untaught hearts in Albion Street and Barrack Hill, or amidst the crowds of factory workers, who were brought to weep and wail aloud at the thought of God and eternity, might never get beyond those mere sobs and tears—might catch only a momentary glimpse of a higher world, and then pass again into darkness; and yet surely the very state of mind which made them capable of such tears had already raised them far above their former state of stolid indifference and moral debasement, and brought them at least several steps nearer the kingdom of God than they were before. There are those—let us never forget it—whose deeper nature must be reached, primarily and chiefly, not through the head, but through the heart.

It was a time doubtless of high but in the main of sacred and salutary excitement. Occasionally no doubt the tide of feeling was too unrestrained—more continuous and less subjected to regulative control, than with a view to solid and enduring results would have been desirable. There was not indeed too much feeling; but there was perhaps too little thought—not too much of the whirlwind and of the fire, but possibly too little of the still small voice.

Without any less of the religion of the heart, there might have been more of the religion of the informed judgment, the educated conscience, and of the disciplined will. It is hard in any case, and under any ministry, fully to reconcile and combine what may be called the stimulative and the educative functions of the gospel message—to give full scope at once to the powers that stir and to the principles that should guide and control the spiritual nature. I do not say—least of all would the subject of this memoir have said—that in the present instance this reconciliation was perfectly attained. In the great lack, too, of wise guides of souls, and in the comparative inexperience in such work even of those who were most fitted for it, it is not wonderful if a spiritual movement, at once so extensive and profound, should have got occasionally somewhat beyond control; and if some portion of its good results should thus have been lost or have passed away into impure and morbid forms. Even a Divine work in human hands partakes ever and necessarily more or less of the imperfection and the error of that which is human. In the main, however, and with every reasonable allowance for such imperfection and error, we believe this remarkable movement to have been a real and most blessed work of the Spirit of God—a true awakening, through His heavenly breath, of the spiritual nature, and quickening of the springs of highest life in multitudes of human souls. If it was an enthusiasm, it was an enthusiasm of faith, of love, and of holy endeavour and aspiration.

Still let it be admitted that the dangers apprehended from excessive and too continuous excitement, if often

exaggerated, are nevertheless real, and that so far as they can be avoided, they are, in the interest of the work itself, and for the honour of Him whose work it is, to be sedulously and anxiously guarded against. "There being a great many errors and sinful irregularities," to use again the words of Edwards, "mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness, and corruption, does not indeed hinder it from being very glorious. Our follies and sins in some respects manifest the glory of it. The glory of divine power and grace is set off with the greater lustre by what appears at the same time of the weakness of an earthen vessel. It is God's pleasure to manifest the weakness and unworthiness of the subject at the same time that he displays the excellency of his power and the riches of his grace. And I doubt not but some of these things which make some of us here on earth to be out of humour, and to look on this work with a sour countenance, heighten the songs of the angels when they praise God and the Lamb for what they see of the glory of God's all-sufficiency, and the efficacy of Christ's redemption. And how unreasonable is it that we should be backward to acknowledge the glory of what God has done, because the devil, and we in hearkening to him, have done a great deal of mischief." Still none the less error is error, and sin is sin, and both are to be with the utmost watchfulness and care guarded against, so that the work which we recognize as divine may not only be, but be seen to be, "honourable and glorious," and that no needless stumbling-block may be thrown in the way of any true though feeble seeker after God.

Whether, then, and to what extent, any such incidental evils had appeared in the present case, was a most fair and important subject of inquiry; and a committee was accordingly appointed for that purpose by the presbytery of Aberdeen, moved thereto chiefly by some very unfair and one-sided accounts of some of the meetings which had appeared in one of the public prints. The result was eminently satisfactory. The proceedings were conducted on the whole—as Mr. Burns himself most cordially admitted—with candour and fairness, and in such a manner as fully to elicit the essential elements of the truth. To the convener of the committee in particular, the Rev. Wm. Pirie,[1] he felt himself under deep obligation for the kindness and courtesy with which he conducted his own examination, when called personally to appear as a witness. A part of his evidence it may be proper here to give, both as illustrating his general character and views, and the light in which he regarded the special matters then in question. We may only further premise, in order to the clearer understanding of some of the questions, that the newspaper attack referred to consisted partly of a professedly verbatim report of the proceedings at one of the meetings,[2] and partly of a leading article, commenting thereon with great bitterness and severity:—

"*Q.* Could you state those peculiarities of the *Herald's*

[1] Now Rev. Dr. Pirie, Professor of Divinity in the University of Aberdeen.

[2] The meeting for inquirers held in Bonaccord Church on November 23d, referred to in the extract from journal of that date, see above, page 169.

report which makes it, as you have said in your letter to Mr. Mitchell, a 'caricature' of what was spoken by you on the occasions referred to?[1]

"*A.* Among these peculiarities, I may mention the following as *occurring to me at the moment*:—1st, *The manner in which the whole is printed*, by the use of hyphens, and the parenthetical insertion of remarks by the reporter. The reason of my speaking with *peculiar* slowness on the occasion referred to, was to prevent, if possible, the charge of trying to excite the people being brought against me by the enemies of the work present. 2d, *The omission of sentences throughout* which are necessary to exhibit the true connection of what was said, and the consequent bringing together, and in some cases mixing up, of things which, as spoken, stood apart. 3d, *The entire omission of what was said during the last hour of the address*, the insertion of which is indispensable to give a just impression of the whole service. 4th, *The omission of some introductory remarks*, in which the speaker explained his reasons for addressing those who seemed to have come as spectators, rather than those 'anxious inquirers' for whom the meeting was intimated—a circumstance this which led the speaker to leave the text on which he was to have spoken, and to enlarge in a *remonstrance* with those whom he supposed to have come from questionable motives.

"*Q.* Assuming it to be as a religious exposition delivered from the pulpit, by a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, would you hold the report in the *Aberdeen Herald* (supposing it to be correct) as becoming, decent, and in conformity with Scripture?

"*A.* I have no hesitation in saying that the report in the *Herald*, if read under the idea of its being accurate, and without a knowledge of the particular circumstances in

[1] We give the questions simply, without distinguishing between those put by the convener and those by other members of the Committee.

which these meetings took place, would seem open to the charge of being incoherent in the connection of its meaning, and not well fitted to edify the hearer. Indeed, I have myself met with judicious and godly friends who have been led to fear that the speaker had been imprudent in the case referred to; while, on the other hand, I have not met with any serious person of sound judgment, who was present at the meeting and thought that anything unscriptural or unbecoming in the circumstances had been said or done. Nor do I myself, in the recollection of what took place, know of anything which ought to be condemned by those who hold sound views of Bible truth.

"*Q.* You admit that the words, 'This is the outpouring of the Spirit,'[1] were used by you; how did you know that at the time?

"*A.* This was my own deliberate conviction at the time, and *continues to be so.* The grounds on which I was convinced of this were, not merely those appearances of deep solemnity and a humbling sense of sin which were manifested by many of the people, but also my general knowledge of the state of many of them, from private conversation and the testimony of others. No one can see the propriety of introducing such a statement, unless he had been present and had witnessed the circumstances in which it was made.

"*Q.* How did those appearances of deep solemnity and humbling sense of sin, to which you have referred, manifest themselves in the hearers at the time?

"*A.* The appearances to which I have alluded are, that deep solemnity which one can judge of when present, and all the usual outward marks of grief and humiliation. It is no doubt difficult to judge of such a matter from visible tokens, and specially so in regard to *individual* cases. But, as I have already said, the conviction which I expressed was *not* founded *solely* on the appearances visible at that time, but

[1] Said to have been used by Mr. Burns at the meeting when he had endeavoured in vain to restrain the emotion of the audience.

also on the grounds stated in answer to the previous question; nor would I think it *safe* to judge of such a matter by almost any appearances, if taken apart from the causes which produced them and the effects by which they are followed.

"*Q.* When you used the words referred to, 'This is the outpouring of the Spirit,' how was it possible for you, in conformity with the explanation given in your last answer, to tell what the effects would be?

"*A.* I am fully convinced that it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to judge, in regard to a *particular individual*, that the concern which that individual feels is the effect of special and saving grace; but, at the same time, I have no doubt that any one who is acquainted, from Scripture, and especially by experience, with the saving work of God's Spirit, can on good grounds conclude that the Spirit of God is working remarkably *among a people*, even before time has *fully* proved the effects of that work upon the lives of individuals.

"*Q.* Did you know a great proportion of the parties beforehand?

"*A.* I was accustomed to meet them almost day by day; to converse privately with those who were anxious; and, in this way, had an opportunity of obtaining a general knowledge of their religious state. I also heard, from various quarters, of the state of some of them when at work and when at home, and thus could more confidently judge that they were really impressed by divine truth.

"*Q.* Did you witness any physical manifestations on that night?

"*A.* If by 'physical manifestations' be meant the indications of grief alluded to in such texts as in Zechariah xii. 10, 'They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, *as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born*'—if this be meant, I did see such indications of feeling, and I would desire to see them on a far larger scale.

"*Q.* It is meant, did you hear sobs, crying, screaming, or did you see any one faint or fall into convulsions?

"*A.* I certainly did see, and expect to see in such cases, much weeping, some audibly praying to God for mercy, and occasionally also individuals crying aloud as if pierced to the heart. I don't remember that any one fell down or fell into convulsions on the night referred to, although I have occasionally seen such cases, both in Aberdeen and in other places, and among these, strong men in the prime of life.

"*Q.* Do you think persons so excited can by possibility further benefit from pulpit ministrations?

"*A.* I should think that *the most direct means of composing persons under such spiritual concern, is the calm and tender ministration of the gospel of Christ.* Of course, if the bodily frame is so much affected as to prevent the intelligent hearing of the word, no benefit can be derived from it. When people have fallen into a swoon, the latter is the case, and such persons had better be removed; but where there is much weeping, there may be, at the same time, the *best* preparation for listening to the exhibition of Christ.

"*Q.* Am I to understand you, when you said, in a foregoing answer, that you did see persons weeping and audibly praying to God for mercy, and occasionally also individuals crying aloud, as if pierced to the heart, that you considered these as sure evidences that the Spirit of God was savingly working upon these persons?

"*A.* I have already stated very fully the grounds of my conviction that the Spirit of God was at that time powerfully working among the people *taken as a whole*, but I have a firm and growing conviction that there often are, at such seasons, individuals who manifest a great degree of feeling, and yet afterwards show that they continue in their natural state.

"*Q.* Do you not think public meetings protracted until ten, or eleven, or twelve o'clock at night, likely to give offence, to interrupt family worship, interfere with family arrangements,

cause family disputes, and to be hurtful to the interests of religion?

"*A.* I confess I am more and more convinced of the great importance, in general, of a sacred regard to the ordinance of God in regard to family and secret worship, and of the importance consequently of having public meetings, as far as possible, concluded at an early hour; at the same time, *I have no doubt* that there are cases in which it is for the glory of God that public worship should be more protracted. In places where the people cannot meet earlier than eight o'clock I have generally found that we could not end before ten o'clock, and this is the hour at which, generally, the public meeting has been dismissed, although, in a few cases, it has seemed necessary to remain to a later hour with those who were anxious about their souls."

Besides these oral statements, the following written replies to some of the questions proposed by the presbytery seem to me worthy of permanent record:—

"*Q.* Have you had many opportunities of seeing persons in different places affected at religious meetings in the way in which the persons referred to were affected in Bonaccord Church?

"*A.* I have had *many* such opportunities.

"*Q.* What have you found to be the result generally, in as far as the religious state of those persons was concerned, as displayed in their after-conduct?

"*A.* I have known cases in which persons so affected, even to a great degree, have turned out ill; though I believe they were at the time really affected with a sense of their guilt and danger. In the generality of cases, however, I have had good reasons to hope that such persons underwent a saving change. They were at least greatly changed to the eye of man.

"*Q.* Have you carefully inquired as to such results?

"*A.* I *have* been careful to inquire as to these results, and

often feel a burden of concern on my soul about the case of such persons, using all the means in my power to ascertain and to insure their consistency, and their growth in the knowledge of God.

"*Q.* Have you found that, when persons have not been strongly affected, to all appearance, in religious meetings, they had been awakened to any great concern about their spiritual state?

"*A.* I have found *many* who have been brought to a deep, spiritual, and abiding sense of sin, without manifesting their concern to those around any farther than by silent tears or deep seriousness of demeanour. Such cases, if really deep, are in general, I think, to be marked for stability.

"*Q.* What sort of persons have you generally seen much affected at such meetings? Were they those who had been utterly careless about religious truth, and very ill acquainted with the facts of religion, or those who had been accustomed to pay some attention to religious ordinances, and had an acquaintance with these facts?

"*A.* They have been of both the classes mentioned in the question. I do not know that persons of little knowledge are harder to bring to a sense of sin than others better informed; the Spirit of God worketh when and where he pleaseth. But I think that I have found those persons *generally* most *stable* after they were awakened, who had full religious knowledge, and especially who lived in godly families. Yet I know remarkable instances of persons becoming eminent for godliness in the most disadvantageous circumstances, and who seemed rather to get good than evil from seeing the wickedness of their relations around them."

One or two extracts from letters to the convener of the Committee will complete the account of the part borne by him in this deeply interesting and important investigation.

". . . Allow me, also, here to express the kindness shown

to me, by the Committee and by the Convener, at my appearance before them. The *truth* will always bear examination. In this case I fear nothing, except a superficial or prejudiced consideration of the facts. A close and holy scrutiny will indeed expose the emptiness of the work of *man;* but the work of Jehovah, like his inspired Word, the more it is examined will appear the more clearly to be worthy of his own infinite perfections. . . .

"I may take, also, this opportunity of explaining more clearly than I was able to do in my examination before the Committee, my deliberate opinion of the grounds on which I would feel warranted to judge of the reality of the Holy Spirit's work *among a people*, or in the case of *an individual.*

"The *full* and *complete* evidence of His work, whether in the case of *a people* or of *an individual*, is to be drawn from the manner in which they are affected under the preaching of the gospel, taken in connection with the *truths by which* they are so affected, and the effects which are afterwards habitually manifested in their temper of soul and outward conversation. It is the *safe* method, as a *general* rule, to judge of any real or supposed work of God *among a people* from these sources taken *all* together; and in the case of *individuals*, except the instance be *very* remarkable indeed, I would *not* think it *safe* to decide that a saving work of the Holy Ghost had taken place, until the spiritual, consistent, and permanent character of the individual had made it evident. I am, however, fully convinced that a minister of God, if *experimentally* acquainted with the saving work of God on his own soul, and especially if he has had opportunity of witnessing the work of the Holy Spirit on a large scale, may be warranted, in *remarkable* cases, to conclude that God's Spirit is at work *among a people, before* time has *fully* proved the work by its permanent effects; nay, that he may even do so from witnessing the power of the truth on the minds of an audience at a public meeting, and without *particular* previous knowledge of the state of individuals, and yet not be liable to

the charge of rash and unwarrantable judgment. I conceive, for instance, that the apostles must have been convinced that the Holy Ghost was remarkably outpoured on the day of Pentecost, *when* they *saw* the mighty power of the gospel on the souls of thousands. I have no doubt that Mr. Livingstone, and other ministers and people of God, were convinced, at the Kirk of Shotts, of the same things, *without* needing to wait until the permanent fruits of the work were *developed*. I could myself have no more doubt of this than of any Scripture truth, on that memorable day when the work of the Lord began in so glorious a manner at Kilsyth. On many other occasions, also, I have considered myself warranted in coming *at the time* to the same *general* conviction; and have *never* yet found that this general conviction was weakened, much less destroyed, by after-experience. In the meeting referred to, in Bonaccord Church, on Monday the 23d November, 1840, I could have *no* doubt, from the nature of the truth spoken, the manner in which I felt supported of God's Spirit in speaking it, and the evident effect produced by it on the minds of *many* of the audience, and, more or less, on the minds of *almost all*, that the Holy Ghost was then exerting his gracious power among us; at the same time, as I stated to the Committee when examined, *it is a matter of fact* that my judgment, expressed in the words which I felt called on to use, 'This *is* the outpouring of the Spirit,' was actually founded, *not merely* on the circumstances I have just stated, but also on the knowledge which I had previously obtained regarding the state of many persons under deep concern about the salvation of their perishing souls."

The committee of presbytery very properly extended their inquiries beyond the sphere of their own immediate jurisdiction, to some of the other scenes of Mr. Burns' labours, where a religious movement essentially similar to that at Aberdeen had taken place, and where from

the lapse of time its real nature and tendency could be the better tested. The result was a remarkable concurrence of weighty and impressive testimony alike to the depth and extent of the influence at work, and of the holy and enduring fruit in the hearts and lives of multitudes of its subjects. Some portions of that evidence will be given in the Appendix to this volume. It may be enough here to present the general result of the presbytery's investigation, as embodied in the deliverance adopted by them, on a full consideration of the whole facts and bearings of the case:—

"The Presbytery, having taken into their solemn consideration the evidence on revivals of religion received by their Committee on that subject, resolved,

"1. That a revival of religion, consisting in the general quickening of believers, and the conversion of multitudes of unbelievers, by the Holy Spirit, cannot but be an object of most earnest desire to every follower of the Lord; that the genuineness of such a revival is chiefly to be tested by the nature and permanence of the effects by which it is followed; that it can only be expected to flow from the use of the appointed means, accompanied with the abundant outpouring of the Spirit of God; that it should be made a subject of fervent and persevering prayer; and that, when such a revival takes place, it should not be dreaded or spoken of with levity, but should be carefully and seriously marked, and acknowledged with devout thanksgiving.

"2. That the evidence, derived from answers to certain queries sent by the Committee to ministers and others in different parts of the country, amply bears out the fact that an extensive and delightful work of revival has commenced, and is in hopeful progress in various districts of Scotland—the origin of which, instrumentally, is to be traced to a more widely diffused spirit of prayer on the part of ministers and

people, and to the simple, earnest, and affectionate preaching of the gospel of the grace of God; that this work in the districts referred to, many of which are locally far distant from others, has been attended with few of those evils which have generally more or less characterized seasons of great religious excitement; and that, on the whole, an amount of good has been accomplished, which loudly calls for gratitude and praise to Him 'who turneth the hearts of men as the rivers of water.'

"3. That in the case of Aberdeen, to which the evidence more especially refers, it clearly appears, so far as the test of time can be applied to the subject, that a very considerable number of persons, chiefly in early life, have been strongly, and it is hoped savingly, impressed with the importance of eternal things, and are in the course of further instruction; that many of all ages have been awakened to a more serious concern about Christ and salvation than they formerly felt, and have been quickened to activity in well-doing; and that the labours of Mr. W. C. Burns, preacher of the gospel, are peculiarly discernible in connection with these results. At the same time, the Presbytery cannot but regret that such an exclusive reference should have been made to two particular meetings at which Mr. Burns presided, where the services were protracted to a late hour, and where much outward excitement prevailed—circumstances obviously liable to much inconvenience as well as misconception—while it appears from the evidence that many other meetings were held for religious instruction, through the same instrumentality, which could be liable to no such misconception, and where much good was wrought. And, upon the whole, the Presbytery are convinced that, if it had entered more into the nature of the inquiry to ascertain simply the extent of the awakening that has been effected in this city and neighbourhood, the evidence of a favourable kind would have been such as to lead to increased thanksgiving.

"4. That the Presbytery having considered the whole

evidence that has been laid before them on this unspeakably important subject, feel themselves called upon to recommend to all ministers, preachers, and elders within their bounds, in their respective spheres, to labour more and more diligently and prayerfully, in the use of all scriptural means, to promote the cause of vital religion, which needs so much to be revived among us; and they would also exhort and entreat all the private members of the Church to study to grow in grace, to abound in all the fruits of righteousness, and to plead more earnestly with the great Head of the Church that he would pour out of his Spirit more plentifully upon us, and bless his appointed ordinances, that the wilderness may become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."

Before the commencement of the investigation, Mr. Burns had already closed his labours at Aberdeen, having been called to take the temporary charge of a new church at Dundee. He left for that town on the 5th of December, at early dawn; but not too early to find awaiting him at the place of departure a number of those who had learned to look to him "even as an angel of God," and who parted from him with many tears:—

"*Saturday, December 5th.*—Though I was very late up last night (this morning), and had but a short time for sleep, I awoke of my own accord at the proper time quite refreshed, and set out at twenty minutes to seven with the Dundee mail. A number of my young friends had found out the time of my departure, and stood by on the pavement in tears. The mockery of many around made our tongues silent: we looked at each other, with Jesus in our hearts' eye I hope, and wept."

CHAPTER VIII.

1840.

WORK AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

"I SHALL never forget," says one to whom Mr. Burns "was more than any other man," "the first time I saw him. It was at Lawers, on Sabbath the 16th of August, 1840. The whole country was ringing with the wonderful movement in Kilsyth, Perth, and Dundee, with which his name was associated. It was rumoured too that a short time before a person had died in connection with one of his services. A great multitude assembled, not only with the ordinary feelings of curiosity, but with feelings of wonder and solemnity deepening almost into fear. I can remember the misty day, and the eager crowds that flocked from all directions across hill and lake. The service was of course in the open air, and when the preacher appeared many actually felt as if it were an angel of God. There was an indescribable awe over the assembly. Mr. Burns' look, voice, tone; the opening psalm, the comment, the prayer, the chapter, the text (it was the parable of the Great Supper in Luke xiv.), the lines of thought, even the minutest; the preacher's incandescent earnestness; the stifled sobs of the hearers on this side, the faces lit up with joy on that;

the death-like silence of the crowd, as they reluctantly dispersed in the gold-red evening—the whole scene is ineffaceably daguerreotyped on my memory. It was the birthplace of many for eternity. Last year (1868), when a deputation from the General Assembly visited the presbytery of Breadalbane, in connection with the state of religion, a venerable minister stated that such of the subjects of that gracious work as still survive adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour in all things. Most of the congregations in the district received the divine shower."[1]

Mr. Burns' labours in Breadalbane, or the romantic district that lies along the margin of Loch Tay, took place between the periods of his first and of his second visit to Aberdeen described in the last chapter, and constituted altogether one of the most interesting and characteristic parts of his whole evangelistic course. Here he was peculiarly at home. The solemn forms of the everlasting hills and the great shadow of the supernatural which they seemed to cast even over the spirit of the people were congenial to him. The Sabbath stillness too, and the fresh and healthful upland air, contributed to restore tone and vigour to a frame on which the fevered atmosphere of city life and city work had begun sensibly to tell. Never probably at any period of his life was he more happy in the best sense than during this interval of quiet thoughtfulness and restful labour—kneeling in lonely prayer in some forest thicket by the river or

[1] *The Shepherd of Israel: or Illustrations of the Inner Life.* By the Rev. Duncan Macgregor, M.A., Minister of St. Peter's, Dundee. Pp. 236–7.

mountain side, or standing up before those arrested crowds that hung upon his words, silent and solemn as the mountains around. Never, probably, were the sacred impressions produced by his preaching more deep and spiritual than here, or the tendency to an unhealthy and nervous excitement less. The following graphic words from the writer already quoted were true of him at all times, but at this time emphatically so: "Like the Baptist he came preaching repentance, and with terrible earnestness warned the thousands that flocked to hear him to flee from the coming wrath. Like the Baptist, too, he was independent of home ties—lived, as it were, in the wilderness, 'making himself grandly solitary for the work of Christ!' His very eyes left their light with you after he had gone. . . . And yet there was an Isaiah-like grandeur about his expositions of the gospel. When his lips were touched with the live coal, it was indeed a feast of fat things to hear him. And even when he was straitened, which he often was, owing to the incessant demands upon him, there was always something precious which stuck fast in the memory."

To this interesting period of Mr. B.'s labours we propose to devote the present chapter; but it will be proper before entering on it, to glance briefly at the course of his movements during the three preceding months.

For some weeks after he left Aberdeen, those seasons of "straitening," of which Mr. Macgregor speaks, had been more than usually frequent and painful to him. The reaction of feeling and the physical exhaustion naturally succeeding a time of high excitement, produced a languor

alike of mind and body, which even his vigilant self-jealousy could not avoid attributing, in part at least, to other than spiritual causes. Thus at Dundee, May 3d, at the close of a Sabbath's services, he writes, "I was tired and had not much of the Lord's comfortable presence in my work, feeling that I needed rest for the body and a season of solemn retirement to meet with the Lord in personal communion." And again at Stirling, May 6th, "I did not come here with an expectation of doing much, on two grounds: 1st, That my bodily strength was much reduced; and 2d, my mind needed recreation to restore its elasticity and power." Yet even then, sometimes the bow drawn at a venture, albeit by an enfeebled hand, would send an arrow of divine conviction home to some favoured heart:—"I was going out," says he, May 13th, "on Monday night among the people, and dropping words here and there, I somehow looked up the stair when the people were coming down, and the eye fixing on a young man, I pointed to him and said aloud, 'Will *you* come to Christ?' On Tuesday this young man came to me in great distress, and told me that he was a smith belonging to Scone, who was living there when I was in Perth, and often attended our meetings. He said he often wanted to be awakened, and wondered how he was so little moved, when so many around him were. He remained in his undecided state until these words were so remarkably directed to him. They went like a knife to his heart, and seemed to bring him to the foot of the cross!"—He struggled on in the endeavour to fulfil engagements already made, till a

decided attack of illness compelled him to pause and "rest a while" under the hospitable roof of Collessie manse, where his kind friends Mr.[1] and Mrs. M'Farlane welcomed and nursed him with an affectionate tenderness, which he never afterwards forgot. In a week or two, however, he was at his work again, preaching to large and deeply moved audiences in various places in Fifeshire, and meeting with unexpected encouragement and support even from some of those ministers who would have been thought least likely to favour his line of things. Dr. Barclay of Kettle, the oldest minister of the Church of Scotland, then in his ninety-first year, who had been always ranked amongst the Moderate party, shook him warmly by the hand as he came down from the pulpit, saying, "I thank you most heartily," and urged him to return. Dr. Ferrie of Kilconquhar,[2] reputed of similar views, made him free alike of his house and of his church, entered with the deepest interest into all the solemn scenes which attended his preaching, and told him that "while he was with him he was to act exactly as if he were the minister of the parish." In the neighbouring parish of Anstruther, then under the pastoral charge of Dr. Ferrie's son, he had a like freedom of action, and a like open and effectual door of access to the consciences and hearts of the people, all the ministers of the place cordially uniting their congregations to form one deeply solemnized audience, in the midst of which "some of the most hardened sinners of the town were seen turning pale as death and

[1] Now Dr. M'Farlane, of the Free Church, Dalkeith.

[2] Also Professor of Civil History in the University of St. Andrews.

shedding tears" under the preacher's appeals. Here he was in the midst of interesting scenes and reminiscences. "Mr. Ferrie's manse," he writes, "is the same that the celebrated James Melville, minister of East Anstruther after the Reformation, lived in, and I spent most of my time on Saturday as also on Sabbath in his study, a little room over the stair which juts out from the house on the outside. It is called 'The Watch Tower,' and is well suited to the name, as it has three small windows looking east, west, and south, from which one can see almost all the town and the whole frith." And again, two days afterwards, July 1st, "I spent the day chiefly alone, seeking personal holiness, the fundamental requisite in order to a successful ministry. I was in Burleigh Castle for an hour on the first floor, which is arched and entire, having climbed up by a broken part of the wall. Before me I had to the right Queen Mary's Island in Lochleven, and to the left the Lomonds, where the Covenanters hid themselves from their persecutors, and I stood amid the ruins of the castle of one of their leaders. The scene was solemn and affecting, and I trust the everlasting Emmanuel was with me. O that I had a martyr's heart, if not a martyr's death and a martyr's crown!"

After rapid visits to Strathmiglo, Milnathort, Cleish, Kinross, and Dunfermline, he now proceeded westward by Stirling, Gargunnock, and Kippen, to Kilsyth, and thence, after nearly a month of quiet pastoral work, which was to him almost like repose, northward to those scenes amongst the "Sabbath hills," where we have now to

trace his footsteps. Here his own journal is so full and interesting, and gives withal so vivid a picture of the whole form and idea of his life, that I am tempted to give the larger part of it almost entire. He had left Kilsyth on the 12th August, and after spending two days of incessant labour in Glasgow, proceeded northward *viâ* Lochlomond and Glen Falloch to Lawers, where he commenced his labours on Sabbath the 16th, the day referred to by Mr. Macgregor, and thence advanced gradually eastward to Fortingall, Aberfeldy, Logierait, Moulin, Tenandry, Kirkmichael, as God in his providence opened the way, welcomed everywhere by a solemnly expectant and willing people. His first entry is at Inverarnan, at the head of Lochlomond, and opens with a graphic incident characteristic of the place and of the people:—

"*Inverarnan, Friday, August 14th.*—I travelled to Inverarnan, at the head of Lochlomond, where I slept. Nothing particular occurred by the way, except that I spoke to one or two of my fellow-travellers, wandering in quest of pleasure, and was generally in such a dead frame of soul that I had to remain below, and could not dare to open my mouth in the Lord's name. At Inverarnan I spent much of the afternoon in wandering about and admiring the grandeur of the Lord's works in this mouth of the Highlands of Perthshire. I noticed two things among the people as affording an index to the nature of the privileges they had enjoyed. Some seemed to have full knowledge of a kind that is only to be got by hearing the most spiritual and systematic of our Scottish preachers, and one woman I met on the road who seemed to me a perfect specimen of a groaning hypocrite (perhaps I am doing her injustice, the Lord pardon me if I am); as soon as

I began to speak to her, she wrung her hands and twisted her features as if trying to manufacture the symptoms of repentance, &c. This agreed well with what I know had been the Lord's dealings with this part of the country. They have had under some ministers the *very best preaching*, and some of the people retain not only the mould of the doctrine taught them, but the recollection of the deep and overpowering emotions which it produced in the hand of the Spirit upon many minds at a former period; particularly about twenty years ago, when Breadalbane, &c., was signally blessed of the Lord, under the preaching of Mr. M'Donald and other godly ministers.—Evening, I had a meeting in the toll-house adjoining the inn, with about twenty persons, chiefly men, who seemed solemnized. The innkeeper was not very anxious for this meeting when I spoke of it to him. He had much scriptural knowledge, and many of his expressions put me in mind of Mr. M'Donald's phraseology, but his attachment to his trade seemed stronger than his theology. His family I was much interested in, and they upon the whole received me well, though I did not spare the publicans' trade even when Mrs. M'Callum was present. I this forenoon travelled by the Dunkeld coach from Inverarnan to Lawers, up Glen Falloch, down Glen Dochart, and by Killin along the side of Loch Tay, a splendid route for a great part of the way. I did little on the way but sigh occasionally over the poor people whom we passed, and to wish them an interest in Emmanuel. I also gave away one or two little books to Highland boys in their kilt, who hung upon the coach from time to time. Dear boys, they looked surprised and pleased! At Killin I breakfasted along with two young gentlemen on a fishing excursion, who seemed to eye me suspiciously with my black clothes and white neck-cloth, and took care to allow me to begin breakfast before them, I thought, in order that I might not ask a blessing aloud. When leaving them I said, 'I am a fisher too.' They looked grave, and one of them said, 'Oh! a fisher of men, I suppose.' 'Yes,' I said, 'but like other fishers

we have often to complain of a bad fishing season. They smiled, and so we parted. I arrived at Lawers at one P.M., and found Mr. Campbell a truly pious and very kind man. His partner equally so.—Evening, I walked up the hill, and prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. I had, however, to walk by faith and not by sense.

"*Lawers, Sabbath, August 16th.*—A congregation of, I suppose, fifteen hundred assembled, though the day was unfavourable, at the tent by twelve o'clock, to whom I preached, but with little assistance, speaking comparatively, from Luke xxiv. 16, &c.; at the end I told them that I had got no message for them from the Lord, but that I was not therefore led to despair of yet getting a blessing among them, as I generally found that when the Lord meant to pour out his Spirit, he first made both preacher and people sensible that without him they could do nothing. A godly man has since that time told me that he felt an unusual fulness of heart that morning at family worship, and thought there would be something unusual done.—Evening, We met in the church, which holds five hundred sitters, and was crowded. I preached from the parable of the barren fig-tree, and had much more assistance. A good many were in tears, and one cried aloud as we were dismissing them.

"*Lawers, Monday, August 17th.*—We met for public worship at twelve o'clock. The church was crowded, though the day was very stormy. I spoke from the 51st and 32d Psalms, particularly upon confession of sin, and the people seemed very solemnly impressed, some, perhaps many, being in tears. When I had done Mr. Campbell came up and spoke a little very solemnly in Gaelic, and the people became much more visibly moved. When the blessing was pronounced a great many remained in their seats, and some of them began to cry out vehemently that they were lost, &c. &c. We in consequence continued praying and speaking to them until about five o'clock, when we thought it good to let them remain alone, seeing that we were to have public worship again at six

o'clock; at half-past six Mr. Campbell of Glen Lyon preached in Gaelic from Matthew xxv. 10, and gave some account at the close of the wonderful work of the Lord at Tarbat in Ross-shire. When I went into the church near the close, I heard some persons groaning, and when we were separating one woman cried out bitterly. We parted about half-past eight, as we were to meet next day at twelve again. A great day!

"*Tuesday, August 18th.*—We had a prayer-meeting at twelve, when the church was three-fourths filled. Mr. M'Kenzie began and was followed by Mr. Campbell, both in Gaelic. This occupied nearly two hours, and when I went to the pulpit I found it my duty to dismiss the people without detaining them any longer, offering, however, to converse with any individuals who might desire it. From one hundred and fifty to two hundred waited about the door, and with these I engaged in prayer. During the prayer the Spirit of God was mightily at work among us, so that almost all were deeply moved, and one man cried aloud. Mr. M'Kenzie said that he almost never felt in the same way as at this time. After prayer I addressed the people in a series of miscellaneous remarks tending to bring them immediately to surrender to Jesus. Many I saw in tears, and among these a number of fine stout young Highlanders. We then prayed again, when the impression continued, and concluded by singing Psalm xxxi. 5.

"This day at a quarter to one conversed with the following anxious inquirers:

"1. M. C., aged seventeen, C——h, East Lawers, 'Oh! I am deep, deep in sin.' She got her eyes opened on Sabbath night in the church. 'I saw that I was utterly lost.' 'I have not found Christ yet.' 'Who can lead you to Christ?' 'The Holy Spirit.' Deeply affected.

"2. C. C., above twenty, C——e, West Lawers. Concerned three years ago, particularly from a sermon of Mr. Campbell's of Glen Lyon, on 'How shall we escape?' &c. He said, that if they went away from the church neglecting Christ, they

would be trampling on his bosom, &c. It was this that affected her. She has been more deeply affected during these days past.

"3. C. R., aged twenty, C——n, West Lawers. 'I can get no rest nor peace, my heart is seeking after something which I cannot get. This began when I came into the church on Monday morning and heard you praying. I felt as if my heart would come out. I have been seeking Christ, but I have not got near to him yet.' Deeply and tenderly affected.

"4. R. M., servant to Mr. Campbell, came with them from Benbecula (about eighteen years); was awakened on Saturday night at worship in this room, the first meeting that I had after arriving. 'I felt as if something were gripping my heart in the inside, and could get no rest since that time.' Seems deeply and *habitually* concerned. This we see, as she lives in the house.

"5. J. M'L., C——r, West Lawers (about twenty years). 'A word of Mr. Campbell's of Glen Lyon, which he had at the sacrament (ten weeks ago), always keepit wee me. He said that Rebekah's brother asked her, 'Will you go with this man?' and so he said we were to go with Christ. This keepit wee me, and when Mr. Campbell came into the pulpit on Monday night, I first thought, 'I have not yet gone with Christ,' and when he spoke of the door being shut, and we being out for ever, I saw that I would be out, &c. I have got no rest since. (She cried out in agony that night.) I often was concerned before, but it always went away when I came out. If the Lord had not been merciful I would have been in the place where his mercy is gone for ever long ago, to be sure,' &c.

"6. B. M'G., M——h, four miles west (aged twenty-one years). Was a little touched at the Glen Lyon sacrament (ten weeks ago), when Mr. Campbell's brother was preaching, especially by his saying, 'If you are missing the Spirit it will be ill for you.' I did not go on however at that time until Sabbath, when I felt something at my heart, I did not know

what, and I got worse and worse every day. I heard my conscience crying I was guilty in everything,' &c. &c.

"7. C. C., aged fifteen, a cousin of M. C., stays at C——h, East Lawers; awakened on Monday forenoon; can make little out of her, she has so little English.

"8. C. M'G., aged fourteen, C——h; awakened yesterday forenoon at Struan. She has little English, and I had to question her, through Mr. Campbell, in Gaelic; yet she understood enough to reach her heart, and told me in Gaelic that I had said their hearts were as hard as steel, and how when a sheep was lost they would all go out one this way, and one that way, and the shepherd would go to the hill till they found it, and then they would be satisfied, &c. &c.[1] . . .

"In the evening I preached at six o'clock to a crowded and most solemn audience from Isaiah xlv. 22, and enjoyed some degree of assistance, I think. We concluded about nine o'clock, but just as the people were going away 'a woman that is a sinner' cried out vehemently, and we had to stay and pray again. Many of the people were in tears, and among these some stout hardy men. Praise to the Lord! It is sweet to see how the people show their kindness when their hearts are opened to Jesus. During these few days there have been four fat lambs sent as presents, some to Mr. Campbell and some to me, with many other articles, such as butter, &c.

"*Breadalbane, Fortingall, Friday August 21st.*—In the Lord's wonderful providence, the minister of this dead parish consented to my preaching there this day at twelve noon, and accordingly we went; this morning I felt such an entire vacancy of mind and heart, that it seemed impossible that I could preach. However in secret prayer before leaving the manse I had hopes of a good day. The people were met at the tent, but the wind being high we adjourned to the church. I spoke with assistance at the outset from Psalm lxxii. 16–18,

[1] These few cases are given here once for all, as a specimen of the sort of notices which occur constantly in the course of these journals.

and had considerable enlargement in prayer. The subject was conversion; text, Matthew xviii. 3, and in discoursing upon this I experienced more assistance in attempting to speak home to the very marrow of men's souls than at almost any other time (a few occasions excepted). Two wicked men could not stand it, as we supposed, and retired from their seats. Many others, and among these the stoutest men, were in tears. At the conclusion, when I had pronounced the blessing, I sat down in the pulpit in secret prayer as usual, but to my amazement I heard nobody moving; and waiting a full minute I rose and saw them all standing or sitting, with their eyes in many cases filled with tears, and all fixed on the pulpit. It was indeed a solemn moment, the most solemn Mr. M'Kenzie and Mr. Campbell said they had ever seen. I asked them what they were waiting for, and whether they were waiting for Christ. I prayed again, when there was the utmost solemnity, and then spoke a little from a Psalm which we sung, and then parted at four P.M. The people retired slowly and most of them in tears. We dined at the manse, when all were very serious, and came away immediately in order to hold a meeting in this parish at six o'clock. As we came along the road we overtook some men and women in deep distress, as their tears and sober countenances indicated, and their iron grasp when we shook hands with them. Many also came to their doors and recognized us with evident concern. At six we had a meeting for an hour and half in a house at the east end of this parish, when about a hundred were present. Praise to the Lamb!

"In the evening I walked up the side of Ben Lawers, until I could command a view from the head of Glen Dochart to Dunkeld, having Loch Tay in the centre from Kenmore to Killin. It was a beautiful evening, and the scene was magnificent. However, all my thoughts of external scenery were well-nigh absorbed in the thought of the wonderful works of Jehovah which I had witnessed during the week that was closing among the poor inhabitants of this splendid

theatre of the Lord's creation. I could have supposed that I had been in Breadalbane for a month instead of a week; the events that had passed before me were so remarkable and so rapid in succession. It has been indeed a resurrection of the dead, sudden and momentous as the resurrection of the last day—nay, far more momentous than it to the individuals concerned. After coming home I was alone, and felt much my need of a broken and grateful heart. Mr. Campbell was telling me of some very noted sinners among his people whom he had met with, and who seemed to be genuine penitents.

"*Breadalbane, Ardeonaig, Sabbath, August 23d.*—This morning I crossed the loch at a quarter past eleven, along with hundreds of the people, to preach at the missionary station of Ardeonaig, under the charge of a most primitive Christian minister, Mr. M'Kenzie, a nephew of Lachlan M'Kenzie, late minister of Loch Carron, a very remarkable and eminently honoured minister of Jesus. The tent was placed on the hill-side behind the manse, very nearly on the spot where it stood in the days of the former revival under Mr. M'Donald of Urquhart, and the minister who then was placed here, the eminently godly Mr. Findlater, whose memory is sweet in this neighbourhood. There was an immense assembly, collected from a circuit of from twelve to twenty miles, which could not amount to less than 3000. Mr. M'Kenzie began in Gaelic at eleven. I succeeded him in English at one, preaching from Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. I felt a great uplifting of the heart in pride before God, and though I was enabled so far to get over this as to be able to speak boldly and strongly upon the 'evil ways' of men from which they are called to turn, yet I could make nothing of the display of Jehovah's love which is made in the words, 'As I live, I have no pleasure,' &c.; and though I stopped and prayed with the people for assistance, yet I had to conclude abruptly, having nothing to say but what would profane and degrade in the eyes of the hearers these marvellous words. I came into the house at four o'clock, much cast down on account of

the reigning vanity and pride, and self-seeking of my desperately wicked heart, and was driven to my knees, when I found the Lord very gracious, and had a sweet anticipation given me of the Lord's presence in the evening, when we were to meet in the church. Accordingly we met at six o'clock. I did not discourse on any set subject, but was led to speak upon the Psalm which we were to sing (Psalm cii. 11–14), and in this I felt so much enlarged, that both people and preacher were tenderly moved with a view of Emmanuel's love. After we had prayed I made a few additional remarks of a miscellaneous kind, which seemed also to come home to the heart. When we were separating, some individuals began to cry aloud. I tried to quiet them, as I am always afraid that they are in danger of drawing the attention of many who are less affected away from considering the state of their own souls. However, they could not be composed, and when I went up to the gallery, where the most of them were, I found to my joy that they were persons from Fortingall, who had I suppose been impressed on Friday. We took them along with a number of other persons in the same state into the manse, and after prayer sent them away, though not in the best state for going to so great a distance. Praise! I saw a number of men in the church *much* affected, but they did not come so prominently forward, being better able to restrain their feelings. . . .

"*Monday, August 24th.*—During the greater part of the day my soul was in a light and easy frame, for which I was rebuked in speaking with Mr. M'Kenzie; and from this time till the hour of meeting I was under a humbling sense of pride and impious profanity of heart in the work of God, insomuch that it seemed to me almost beyond hope that I should be supported of the Lord in his public service. I could fix on no passage to speak from, but was led to study with a personal reference Ezekiel xxxvi. 25–27. After I had sung and prayed in the church, I was thinking of speaking on this passage, but not having very clear direction to it, I

thought it better to sing again that I might have further opportunity to cry to the Lord for guidance. I opened the psalm-book and my eye rested on Psalm lxix. 29. The suitableness of the words to my own spiritual state attracted me, and I began to make a few remarks in consequence upon them. I soon however got so much divine light and assistance in commenting on them, that I spoke from them I suppose for an hour, much affected in my own soul, and to an audience in general similarly moved. Mr. M'Kenzie seemed much affected, and said when we came into the manse that I had not had such an hour in Breadalbane before. Oh! how wonderful are the Lord's dealings! how fitted to humble the pride of all flesh, and teach us a child-like and entire dependence on him for all blessings! We were hardly in the manse until a number of men and women came in after us, in deep distress of soul, with whom we had to pray again. . . .

"*Lawers, Tuesday, August 25th.*—We had a meeting here at one o'clock, of thanksgiving to Jehovah for his glorious work in the souls of the people here during the past days. It was conducted chiefly in Gaelic by Mr. Campbell and Mr. M'Kenzie. I spoke a few words at the end, from Psalm cxlix. 1–4. The people seemed in a very solemn frame. As we came from the ferry-boat, we looked into the old church on the lochside, now used as a barn, and joined in giving the Lord praise for the marvellous displays of his saving grace made in it to many who are now in heaven!—Evening, we had a public meeting at six. The evening was fine, and the audience could not be much under 700, I think. Many had come a distance of 8 miles. I was, as yesterday, brought under a deep sense of my inability to say anything to the Lord's glory previous to our assembling, but I was aided in my extremity in no less a degree. I read Mark ix. 41–50, and preached from Luke xvi. 16. I believe I never spoke more *faithfully* in the pulpit than at this time from these three particulars:—He that *presses* into the kingdom of God,

I. Sets his *whole heart* on Christ. II. He gives up all that would prevent his following the Lord fully. III. He fights his way to heaven through the opposition of his enemies. 1. The Devil. 2. The world. 3. The old man, &c. &c. There was very little visible emotion among the people, but the most affecting solemnity and most rivetted attention. It was as if the veil that hides eternity had become transparent, and its momentous realities were seen appearing to the awe-struck eyes of sinners. We parted at a quarter-past nine, after pressing on the people to retire directly home to the throne of grace. I am told to-day (Wednesday) by Mr. Campbell, that for a quarter of a mile from the church every covered retreat was occupied by awakened souls pouring out the heart to God. He seems to think, from all that he saw and has heard to-day, that last night was the most solemn season that we have had at this time. Praise, praise! O *humble me*, good Shepherd, and be thou exalted over all! Amen. . . .

"*Lawers, Friday, August 28th.*—We rode home by Fortingall, passing down to the foot of Glen Lyon, through some of the most sublime scenery that I ever witnessed. . . . I felt awfully the power of corruption in my heart by the way, and when we were within a mile of the foot of the glen I went out and getting down among the rocks by the river side, where the voice was lost in the noise of the gushing flood, I was enabled to cry aloud for help to the Lord. The Lord heard me I think, though, alas! I neither then, nor almost at any time, can get so near to him as I did in former times; I come rather as a minister than as a sinner. Lord, help me! At Fortingall I met G—— G——, formerly in the 79th regiment, in which he served at eight storms and twelve general engagements, and yet escaped with a single wound. He is known in the country as an awful drunkard and a discontented radical, and yet, to the astonishment of many, he was so much affected when I was at Fortingall, that he has been with us at all our meetings since. He said, 'There *is* an impression on my soul, and I am determined to follow it out.'

I could not see that he had got a full view of his sins, but it was sweet to see him even inquiring. . . . I could not believe, when on the way home, that it was possible for me to address in the evening a public meeting at Kiltire, four miles west from Lawers, but when going to the place of meeting I felt that humiliation under God's gracious hand which filled me with hope. The house was crowded, and many were outside at the windows. There must have been 250 in all. I spoke from John x. 27, and had my closed lips again opened, to my own astonishment. The people were deeply solemnized and tenderly moved. It was our last meeting, and I know that many would have wished to shake hands at parting; yet I was rejoiced to see that they seemed so solemnly engaged about the truth, that few sought after this and went rapidly off in solemn silence. Indeed, I think I never had so pleasing a separation from any people. Glory to the Lord! In walking home I overtook a few of the people. They said nothing, but walked in thoughtful silence, and in some cases wept. . . . In looking back upon this work from the beginning till now, it appears to me more clearly the fruit of the *sovereign* operations of God's Spirit than almost any other that I have seen. We have never needed to have any of those after-meetings which I have found so necessary and useful in other places, the people were so deeply moved under the ordinary services. I never saw so many of the *old* affected as in this case. The number of those affected are greater in *proportion* to the population than I have ever seen, and there has been far less appearance of *mere* animal excitement than in most of the cases that I have been acquainted with. Perhaps most of these advantages are to be traced to the excellent ministry under which they have been, and to their universal acquaintance with conversion as a necessary change, and one that some of their fathers underwent.

"*Lawers, &c., Saturday, August 29th.*—I left my dear and kind friends at half-past twelve by the coach, after visiting a young man on his sick-bed, a son of the Baptist

minister. Many of the people recognized me as we went along. Mrs. M'N—— or Mary M'G——, who was on the road, burst into tears and threw herself down upon the dyke. We had a delightful drive. At Kenmore a gentleman in clerical dress, who had been on the front of the coach, addressed me and said, 'You have very affectionate hearers; I am glad to see it. I am a minister of the Church of England, and have under my care fifteen thousand souls in the heart of London,' &c. Another English gentleman who was standing at the inn said to me, 'That is one of the excellent of the earth, his name is Mr. W——. He was a missionary, but had to come home from bad health, and is now travelling from the same cause.' He had a livery servant with him. He left us at Aberfeldy, and I went down and spoke to him while the horses were changing. He seemed a sweet humble Christian man. 'Oh!' he said, 'that is a heavenly scene, if we had only a heaven within; at least *I* want that,' &c. We parted with Christian salutations. The Lord's people are indeed *one in him*, though *separated in the world*. . . .

"*Moulin, Tuesday September 8th.*—This morning I rode with Mr. C. to Straloch, in this parish, through Glen Brirachan, and then preached to about five hundred in the open air at twelve o'clock. I was under a heavy load of conscience all the way to the place of meeting. I got a little relief during the time that Mr. Drummond of Kirkmichael, who had come to meet us, prayed in an adjoining house before I began; but still I was in such bondage of spirit that I could hardly speak to the people, feeling as if they were seeing the infidelity and hypocrisy of my heart from my countenance, and so being unable to look them directly in the face. My text was Isaiah xxxii. 2, first clause, in which I considered, 1st. Why we needed a covert, &c. 2d. What was meant by the wind and tempest. 3d. Who the 'man' spoken of is. 4th. How he becomes a hiding-place. After some introductory remarks on the text I prayed, and then got considerable liberty in speaking of the evil of sin, and its deserving the wind and tempest

of divine wrath. However, when I proceeded to the second head, this assistance was withdrawn, and I was so dark and dead that I had to draw quickly to a close. I prayed, and gave out a concluding psalm, during which Mr. Campbell came and pressed me to say a few words more, as there were people there who in all likelihood would not be got at again. This affected me, yet I could get no greater liberty to speak, and told him that I could not speak at that time for the whole world. I intimated when I had pronounced the blessing, that I desired to speak further to them, and that I was persuaded there must be some cause, either in me or in some of them, for the withdrawal of the Spirit of God; but that though I had no message for them at that time, I would rejoice to remain with any *who were really desiring a blessing to their souls*, and join in crying to the Lord for his help. No one went away. We joined in prayer, the people with far greater solemnity, and I with some degree of liberty; and after I had ended I felt so carried above the power of my enemies, that I began at once upon the topics I had left; and throwing down the gauntlet to the enemies of Jesus, I spoke for a long time with such assistance that I felt as if I could have shaken the globe to pieces through the views I got of the glory of the divine person of Christ, and of his atoning sacrifice to rescue sinners from *eternal death*. The people were bent down beneath the word like corn under the breeze, and many a stout sinner wept bitterly. We separated about four o'clock, and I felt myself called, in consequence of what I had seen and felt, to agree to Mr. Drummond's request that I should go to Kirkmichael on Sabbath week instead of to Grandtully as I had intended. Glory to the Lord! We had some of the *gentry* there in *tears!* . . .

"*Wednesday, September 9th.*—I rode up in the forenoon to B., the property of Mr. S. of S., Perth, where he and his family at present are; with the view of preaching at Tenandry church, near which they are. The scene is the most sublime

that I have almost ever seen, including the pass of Killiecrankie, &c. &c.; but I have no time, even had I the power, to describe the grandeur of the Lord's works in nature. I felt the temptation to be unfaithful to the 'rich man' with whom I was called to live, and through this compliance unfaithful also to the poorer classes around. If we are unfaithful to the rich and great all our faithfulness to others must be more or less hypocritical. This I felt, and being made to cry to the Lord for help, I got so completely over it that when preaching in the evening at Tenandry, with the S.'s, Mrs. H. of S., the builder of the church,[1] &c., present, I spoke boldly and openly of many things that the rich alone could understand, and which they would find it hard to bear unless they would unreservedly submit to Christ and his cross. We met at five o'clock; I spoke from Hebrews iv. 7. At first I had assistance enough to expound, but not enough to reach the conscience with keen exhortation and reproof. However, after praying, I got this for a considerable time, and the people were so much affected that all were rivetted in their looks and some were weeping audibly. The plan followed was this:—I considered the meaning of, 1st. Hearing God's voice. 2d. Hardening the heart. 3d. The arguments against this sin. (*a*) Our losing the promised rest; (*b*) Our having been long called already—'after so long a time;' (*c*) Our being called 'to-day.' After I had prayed I sought to improve these truths by selecting a few passages of God's word, such as 'Ye must be born again,' &c.; 'Come now and let us reason together;' and pressed the people by the arguments of the text to hear and obey these immediately as *the voice of God.* It was this part that seemed to come chiefly *home.* We had an after-meeting with the anxious, who seemed to be numerous.[2] . . .

[1] Situated in the birch wood overhanging the pass of Killiecrankie.

[2] "This service," says one who was present, "lasted from five o'clock till nine, beginning early for the convenience of those who had long distances to walk home, and continued late because the

"*Saturday, September 12th.*—At six P.M. I left Moulin manse, and had a very solemn and affecting parting from this dear family. The servants I conversed with individually during the day, and all, but particularly three of them, were very deeply affected, as they had previously been in church at several of the meetings. Leaving Moulin by Mr. C.'s gig, I drove down the strath to Logierait, where I was kindly received by Mr. Buchanan (another Moderate minister) and his sister. I spent the evening for the most part alone, and in conversation with Mr. B., who is a man of superior talents and attainments in knowledge, and seems to have a good disposition towards those remarkable outpourings of the Holy Spirit in Scotland against which so many are arrayed in open enmity.

"*Logierait, Sabbath, September 13th.*—The morning was fine, and an immense congregation assembled at twelve o'clock in the churchyard, with whom I continued uninterruptedly until five P.M., singing, praying, and preaching the word of life. The subject was 2 Corinthians v. 19–vi. 2. The people were very solemnly affected, indeed more visibly so than on any previous Sabbath that I have been in the Highlands; at one time many were crying aloud in agony, and tears were flowing plentifully throughout the audience. One of the addresses that seemed most signally blessed originated in a somewhat remarkable way. As I was about to engage in prayer at the middle of the service, I noticed two young gentlemen looking down upon the audience from a little eminence a few hundred yards distant from us; and feeling a strong desire to say something that might arrest them in their carelessness at so awfully solemn a time, I called on the people of God to join me in praying for them,

hearers hung upon the preacher's words until the sun had set and the full moon had arisen. It was a memorable night in the history of many."—*Notes of Addresses by the Rev. William C. Burns*, edited by M. F. Barbour, page 28, where a sketch of the sermon will be found.

and spoke so loud that they could easily hear me. When I was doing this a third young man ascended to my view, and joined his companions. The three put me in mind of the three young men who were so remarkably converted at the Kirk of Shotts, when going to Edinburgh to be present at some scenes of public amusement. I told this anecdote, enlarging upon many things which it suggested with much liberty, and the impression seemed to be deeply affecting. The young men in my view, as soon as they heard me speaking of them, and had the eyes of the congregation turned upon them, withdrew from their position and came near, concealing themselves behind the church, where they no doubt heard what was said. The rich people, with *very few* exceptions, remained *to the end;* and some of them I thought seemed solemnly affected, at least for the time. Some of the most pointed appeals were addressed specially to them. Mr. B. seemed satisfied, and gave me encouragement to come to him again. Both he and Mr. C. of Moulin expressed themselves as agreeably disappointed, having expected to hear something very exciting, and not solid and sober.

"*Monday, September 14th.*—This day I spent chiefly alone, in letter-writing, &c., having no meeting in the evening. Oh! how sweet and profitable to my soul I find a day on which I have no public duty! Would that I had more such, if it were the Lord's holy will! In ordinary cases they would be absolutely indispensable, but when the Lord moves in so mighty and sovereign a manner as he is doing now, the mountains become a plain.

"*Tuesday, September 15th.*—Mr. B. left to-day to be absent from home for a fortnight, and parted with me, expressing regret that we could not meet again in public, and pressing me kindly to make all the use I could of his house, &c., in his absence. This I did. We joined solemnly in prayer before parting. The Lord bless him!—Evening: I went down three and a half miles toward Dunkeld and preached at Dowally. The subject I forget. The season was pleasant but in no

respect remarkable. I went home again to Logierait at night.

"*Wednesday, September 16th.*—Being tired last night, and having told the servant that she need not awaken me in the morning, I slept until past ten A.M., and got up, fearing to be too late for the Lochlomond coach, which passed up to Grandtully on the other side of the Tay at eleven o'clock, and trembling at the thought of being hurried so quickly through my secret duties. I got hastily ready, and without taking any breakfast got my luggage ready and set off. On reaching the ferry-boat I learned to my grief that the coach had passed fully a quarter before the usual time, and was already out of sight, and that thus I was left to walk a distance of six miles. I went on with my bag in my hand, thinking that the Lord might have some design of a gracious kind concealed under this frowning occurrence; and when I had gone about one and a half miles, and was passing through the little village of Balnaguard I discovered one which fully explained his mysterious intention. For after I had passed a great number of people engaged under the burning sun in cutting down and also in gathering in the plenteous fruits of the earth, two men in the prime of life came running to meet me, evidently under concern about their state, and pointing to a school-house beside us, the shutters of which were shut in consequence of it being the harvest season, pressed me to meet the people there though it were but for half an hour. I went in, and in the course of not more than seven minutes the room was crowded to the door by people of all ages, from the child of seven to the grandfather of seventy. We prayed; I read the 70th Psalm in the metrical version, and made a few remarks on the last eight lines; we then prayed again, and I came away leaving these dear people in as solemn a frame, to all appearance, as I have ever witnessed any audience. There could not be fewer than one hundred and twenty present, and among these I hardly saw one that was not shedding tears. The wonderful providence by which we had been brought

Most significant in this point of view are such expressions as these in one of the above extracts: "I could not speak at that time *for the whole* world." He said afterwards of the same occasion to a friend, "that the adversary of souls had been at his right hand the whole time; and that each statement which he sought to make from the Word of God seemed to be contradicted by a voice within as soon as made." At another time he felt as if the people might see through his very eyes the hypocrisy and falsehood of his heart, while he uttered mechanically the sound of words, the life and power of which he did not feel. I offer no opinion now in regard to the profound question here involved: whether the principle on which he acted was in itself just; or whether, if just for him, the course of action to which it led were a fit precedent and example for other men. The question is not even properly raised in this form, for his whole ministry during those remarkable years was so plainly exceptional that no warrantable inference can be drawn from his case to that of others. His function and vocation was rather that of the old prophets uttering from time to time the message and the "burden" given to them under the immediate impulse of the Spirit who gave it, than that of the priests whose lips ought at all times to keep knowledge, and to impart its sacred lessons to others even when for the time they enjoy not the full sweetness of it themselves. Even those who may think that the principle on which he acted was carried out by him to too extreme a point will scarcely deny the general truth, that however it may be with the other functions of the pastoral office—as of instruction,

admonition, counsel, persuasion, consolation—for the special work of awakening souls an awakened and immediate sense of eternal realities is of all things most essential. It may be possible enough to explain a doctrine or enforce a duty without anything more than a general and habitual conviction of the truth involved, yet surely if we would make others weep we must weep ourselves. At least if in this matter he erred, he erred on a safer side than that of those who would divorce altogether the message of the preacher from the experience of the man, and who can discourse of the deepest and most sacred exercises of the soul with an equally free and fluent speech, with a cold and with a burning heart. Better a single word spoken in the spirit, than a thousand words of mere sounding breath; better to utter in a few broken sentences a real message from God, than to speak with the tongue of men and of angels a heartless, soulless message of our own.

After all it can scarcely be doubted that the extreme fluctuation of feeling and of consequent freedom of utterance manifested in these journals was in great measure owing to that exhaustion of the vital powers, and that lack of opportunity for studious meditation which the incessant labours of this period entailed; and that in more favourable circumstances his spiritual experiences might have been more equable, and his power in the pulpit more constant. It would appear from expressions which occur here and there in the journals that this was occasionally at least his own impression, and there is much in their general tenor which goes strongly to confirm

that view. It is observable how often his times of deepest depression immediately succeeded his times of highest elevation, as though the one were at least in large measure the reaction of the other. The temporary quiescence of the feelings, equally with the corresponding languor of the bodily frame, was but the inevitable and even salutary result of the sudden unbending of the bow which had been too long and too tightly bent; and it was his trial rather than his error that he could, during these three remarkable years, so seldom obtain that needful restorative repose. It was in circumstances such as his that the gracious Master, who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust, said to his disciples, when they were worn out with the greatness of their labours and with those manifold distractions which left them no leisure even to eat, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." There was no such interval of retreat permitted to him now; but the enjoyment of that precious boon was reserved for another and not distant day.

CHAPTER IX.

1841—1844.

NEWCASTLE, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN.

DURING the next three years Mr. Burns was incessantly engaged in evangelistic work, partly in places which he had already visited, and partly in new fields. Of the latter the most conspicuous were Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Dublin, and to a brief notice of his labours there I propose to devote the present chapter. They were, of course, in most respects essentially similar to those which we have already described in Dundee and Aberdeen, but still possessed some features sufficiently distinct to deserve a separate, though less detailed record. At Newcastle, the first aspect of the field and his first trial of the work were not encouraging. I know not if the "sins and sorrows of the great city" be really greater there than in other communities of similar extent and character with which he had been before acquainted, but it seemed to him, at least, as if it were so. The giant forms of evil with which he had everywhere to contend, stood forth before the eye in more naked and unblushing prominence, as though iniquity were, in truth, too strong to feel ashamed or hide its face. He found himself in the presence of a power which, alike in its extent and terrible

energy, startled and shocked him, and threw him back as scarce ever before on the power that is infinite and divine. "The people of God," he writes a few days after his arrival, "are rallying in their places, and we have them of every name on our side. Ah! but the LORD is with me as a mighty, terrible ONE. This is enough." "I ask it as a favour," he writes to his endeared friend Mr. Milne, "and *plead* for it, that you will lay before your people the case of Newcastle, an iron-walled citadel of Satan. Almighty power, and that alone, can make a breach and plant the banner of salvation in the Lamb on its proud ramparts. They *must* cry, they must wrestle; for the devil is in the field, and the day will be hot." While, too, "the enemy thus came in like a flood," it seemed to him as if the forces on the other side were comparatively few and feeble. "The Scotch Church," says he, "is low here; the audiences were not large. During the week I preached every night but Tuesday and Saturday, but chiefly to the church-going few, including some Christians, with a view to stir them up to come nearer to God. . . . Went out at meal hour and began to invite sinners. Very apathetic. The sleep of death is on the city."

The spell of apathy, however, was soon, at least partially, broken. The announcement of a Sabbath pleasure trip of a more than usually offensive kind having met his eye, his spirit was stirred within him, and he denounced it in a terrible placard, which he signed with his own name and posted up in every street and open place in Newcastle. It fell like a bomb-shell in the midst of the community, startled the ears alike of friends and foes,

and drew general attention to the preacher and his message. A solemn tract on the sins of the city and the impending judgments of God was at the same time prepared and sown broadcast among the people. The newspapers too, both local and metropolitan, took up the matter, bitterly denounced his proceedings, and thus still more loudly rang the bell of alarm in the ears of a community from whom he only desired a hearing, even though they should strike while they heard him. "Newspapers and Socialistic placards," wrote his friend Mr. Bonar of Kelso, "have been making Edinburgh, and I suppose other places, ring with your doings in Newcastle." But he remained calm amid the storm, unmoved alike by the rage of enemies and by the doubts and fears of friends, so only the cause of Christ were helped, and not hindered. "The people in Scotland," said he, "are thinking that the opposition must be awful here. But it is like bomb-shells thrown over our heads and bursting at a distance. They know more of it in London than I do in Newcastle. 'Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.'"

Meanwhile, according to his wont, he soon exchanged the empty churches for the open and crowded streets—preaching to varying audiences and with varying tokens of success on the quay, at the 'Spittal Square, in the Corn and Cloth Markets, in the open space beside the castle, sometimes in continuous and impressive discourse, sometimes in a running fire against Secularist or Romish objectors who started up as opponents from amongst the crowd; sometimes alone, and sometimes dividing the ground with the political lecturer or the puppet showman,

who spread forth their rival wares at a few paces' distance. He had some encouragement, but no very marked or decisive evidence of blessing. He speaks from time to time of "solemn attention;" "very great attention and eagerness;" "a very large and deeply solemn audience;" "a large audience who stood rivetted to the end;" of a "service of three hours' duration, in the castle-yard where Whitfield preached of old;" "and would have remained almost till midnight;" "a considerable audience who continued immovable under darkness and rain;" "the people so much impressed that the stars were out in the sky before we separated;" "some of the old sailors on the quay weeping, and pressing their money on those who gave away the tracts at the end;" yet there were few or none who sought him out in private for spiritual counsel and instruction. Perhaps this might in part arise from the fact that his street audiences here consisted almost exclusively of men—the softer and more impressible sex having, as he suggests, either less curiosity, or more fear of noisy crowds, than in the cities of the north. Now and then, too, after all his labours were over, he would go forth into the dark streets, with a bundle of his "plain sentences" under his arm, that he might see the city in its midnight dress, look down into the depths of that abyss of ruin which for the love of God and man he so vehemently longed to sound, and it may be hold out the torch of life eternal to some poor wanderer whom he might never hope to meet at any other place or time. Strange scenes would sometimes on these occasions meet his eyes and ears: "I went out after coming into my

room and with a bundle of the "plain sentences" paraded some of the chief streets. In this I met with some strange incidents. I offered near the mouth of the Arcade a copy to a gentleman half-intoxicated. He swore fearfully and said, 'Oh, what a cursed country this is! I might go through every town on the Continent, and not meet with such another rascal as you infesting me. Rome is infinitely better than this," &c. On another occasion he writes: "After the meeting I spent a half-hour on the street with tracts, and met with awful proofs of the enormous wickedness of the people, also with many whose language amid their sins seemed almost to be, Oh! that I were saved, oh! that you could do me any good." One is reminded of the heathen in Tertullian's days, of whom he tells us that even their oaths and ejaculated utterances of grief and fear bore witness to their deep consciousness of God and of a higher world, and showed that the "testimony of the soul" was by its very nature on the side of Christ.[1] Sometimes conscience would still more distinctly speak and take part with the reprover against the sinner: "I spoke to three young gentlemen intoxicated; they mocked; but one of them, having separated from the rest, went along with me a short way. He then left me and whistled for his companions, but they had deserted him; and conscience-stricken he called after me, and when I went back asked where I was from, my name and residence, and promised to call on Friday at five P.M., saying with some feeling, 'he had much need of a lecture.'"

Still there was no deep and general impression, and

[1] Testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ.

even the partial interest that had been excited began after a season gradually to die down towards the former state of apathy. The congregations in church were small, the audiences in the open air less numerous and less solemn. The sensation created by the Sabbath placards was passing away, and no deeper and mightier influence apparently had come to supply its place. Even some of his friends, who had most sanguinely hoped for a rich and widespread blessing, began to lose heart. "I had hope at one time," said one of the most ardent of these, "but now I confess it is gone. Every ear seems closed." He himself too almost despaired. Receiving a letter from Mr. Parker, in which he expresses his astonishment that the people could bear his words, he writes in his journal bitterly, "Alas! the people can bear anything here as yet. The body seems so dead, that though you plunge the knife to the heart there is no pain." But it was only the lowest ebb, before the turning of the tide, and before another day had passed it was in full and buoyant flow. God had only made him utterly to despair of self, that he might the more simply and wholly triumph in Christ. We cannot here indulge in numerous extracts, but one or two continuous passages must be given, as affording a vivid picture of the nature of the hot battle which he had expected and which had come at last, and of the spirit in which he fought it:

"*Thursday, September 23d.*—During the day I was very weak in body, and was tempted to think of *neglecting* an opportunity of doing good at the cattle-show, which is held here this day. But the passage turned up, 'If thou say,

Behold, I knew it not,' &c., and I was compelled to go. I found that there was no opportunity for *preaching*, as the show was within a park, and the people outside were staying but a few minutes. Alas! perhaps it may be found in the day of God that there *was* opportunity. Certainly the showmen found an *opportunity* of attracting many. However, I *only* gave away tracts, spoke to the people here and there, and intimated that I would preach in the cloth-market in the evening, which is at the end of the corn-market, the place where, at three P.M., about a thousand were to dine together. The tracts were received by *high* and low. . . . After dinner I felt my strength of body *renewed*, and had hope of something being done of God in the evening. A little after six we went to the scene of action, and found a great crowd around the place, many of them trying to see *in* through the windows, and multitudes waiting for the music at intervals. I thought of heaven lighted with the brightness of a thousand suns, and of poor lost souls longing to be in when it is too late, and forced to hear from afar the joyful praises of the redeemed, loud as the noise of many waters. We had no sooner begun than an immense crowd gathered round. Some of the enemies were enraged and urged the police to interfere, crying, 'Down with him, down with him.' The policeman told me that the people were disturbed by us within, but this was so absurd that he did not insist on it; and as he could not find us guilty of a breach of the *peace*, he soon went away. But although the enemy could not oppose us by *legal* force, they did not cease to show their deadly hatred of what was said and done. Once a stone was thrown, again a quantity of manure, which bespattered my clothes. Afterwards, *in the time of prayer*, when we were prevailing against them *without hand*, they raised a burst of horrid laughter, and pushed the crowd at the side on me with the view of overthrowing the pulpit. At this time I had to pause in the prayer, and when I began to tell them that they could do *nothing* without the Lord's *permission*, and that all they did

would promote his cause, &c., they were quieted for a time; and I was led out to speak with greater power, perhaps, than ever before in Newcastle, putting the sword into the very heart and bowels of the town's iniquities. At this time, and ever after it until ten o'clock, when we parted, there was the greatest solemnity, and a *deep* impression; and though I was frequently interrupted with questions, they *all* tended to bring out in a *marvellous* way the truth of God, so that they who put them were silenced and the people rejoiced. During the first hour and half we were obliged to contend, at intervals, with a tumult of people all around the music in the Corn-market, and the movements of a travelling show taking up its encampment close to us. Even amid those trials, although increased by the contradiction of sinners, I was enabled *not* to waver nor faint; afterward, however, the meeting in the market broke up, the show people were quiet, the streets were nearly empty, and we worshipped the Lord amid solemn silence for another hour and half. At this time the singing was truly sublime; and the whole scene, when contrasted with what it had lately been, was fitted to deepen the impression of the word in the hand of the Spirit. I did not speak on any text, but used the various circumstances of the feast so near as to set off by way of comparison and contrast the feast of fat things on Mount Zion. I did not proceed *regularly*, but from time to time noticed such topics as these:—That feast is for the body, this is for the soul; that is one of which you easily take too much, in this you cannot *exceed;* that is soon over, this will last *eternally;* that would tire and nauseate if often repeated, this becomes sweeter every day; that is only open to those who can pay for a place, this is provided freely for the poor: it is made *free* not because it is of *little* value, but because it is *so* costly that *no money* can buy it, and in order that it may be a feast for *all;* that is made on bullocks and fatlings, but this, oh! wonder of wonders, is made on the body and blood of God's own Son; the greatest sinners are welcome to it *now*, and the greater they

have been they will sit nearer the head of the table as honoured guests, in order that the more the grace and mercy of Jehovah may be displayed to view! These and similar points gave ground from time to time for varied information to the mind, and appeals to the conscience which seemed to arrest many; and the effect of this was aided by the many truths which were from time to time drawn out by the questions and objections of enemies. One man cried there was *no* hell, and demanded a definition of it. He was answered, 'If thy right hand offend thee,' &c., and remained silent. Another said there were no devils, and this was the occasion of tearing away the veil from the iniquities of the town, and exposing *their* power over men in its deformity and dreadfulness. Many in different ways tried to vex us, but this explained the text, 'Consider him who endured,' &c., and gave us ground for praise that we had *not yet* resisted unto *blood*. Nay, one shameless man, whose question the *people* would hardly bear, asked me, 'How are *you* supported?' a matter of general wonder. I answered him that I never needed to ask a penny from any one, but that even since I came *here* £10 had been sent to me unasked, and partly without a name![1] They seemed confounded. At ten o'clock we asked

[1] It may be right to state here once for all, that from the time of his leaving Dundee until his departure for China, he relied wholly on such support as was spontaneously sent to him by those who desired to further his special work. The result was that while his own immediate wants were amply supplied, he seldom lacked sufficient also to contribute liberally in behalf of Christ's cause and Christ's poor. The above is given as a specimen of such entries in regard to this matter as occur from time to time in his journal. The following is the first of these, of date, Perth, January, 1840: "Received £1 from a friend for personal expenses, making now in all, given me since I ceased from my engagement at Dundee, £53. So wonderfully is the Lord providing for all my wants! Praise! Oh Lord! deliver me from covetousness, and enable me with overflowing gratitude and joy to give all that I don't require

the parting blessing and separated—indeed only for a moment, for when I got to the lamp I took out my Bible to look at a verse, and the whole crowd gathered round and stood with breathless attention while I read what God had sent me, 'None of these things move me,' &c., and told them some things about my own conversion. We then parted, and it would not have been so soon, had not the policeman desired it.

"Though I spoke nearly four hours amid such difficulties in the open air I was not fatigued, and am well to-day. Oh! that I were only well in soul, and fit to renew the combat. Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly! Amen! Amen! Glory to Jehovah!

"*P.S.*—When I came into my room and looked at the Bible which was lying open, my eye rested on Psalm cxi. 4, 5. Oh! how glorious and how seasonable it was! 'He hath made his *wonderful* works to be *remembered;* the Lord is *gracious*, and *full* of compassion. He hath *given* meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of *his covenant!*' Halleluiah!

"*Friday, September 24th.*—Sometimes when we think we are much assisted, there may be less *divine* power attending the word than when we are ready to conclude nothing has been done. I trust, however, that the Lord is bringing me nearer to the town, and that soon his own artillery may be opening fire with effect on its central towers and carrying alarm into its citadel! It is not at once that we can come into close conflict with such an enemy, and time is needed to study the enemy's position and weak points, that the fire may take full effect. The Captain of the Lord's hosts is all-wise to direct, and all-powerful to execute. *He* will work, and who shall let it? Who art thou, oh great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou *shalt* become a plain! And he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of grace, grace unto

to promote the extension of thy blessed kingdom in this poor ruined world. Amen."

it. Oh! how glorious a sight to behold this town awakened from its deep sleep, and calling upon God with the *whole heart!* 'The *waste cities shall be filled* with *flocks* of men!' Be it unto us according to thy word. Amen.

"*Sabbath, 26th September.* . . . At five I went out to preach at the 'Spittal, as a man having no strength, yea, as a worm and no man, saying to Mr. S——, I never was so low as this. If it were so that I were truly humbled, it would be different; but I am dead, and that is all. I could not fix upon a text; indeed, every door of hope seemed closed, and I knew that God, and he only, could grant deliverance. I found many already assembled, and in the course of a very short time the crowd became much greater than on any former day, and continued so, and even increasing to the end. I thought of preaching on 'Seeing, therefore, that we have a great high-priest,' &c.; but when I opened the Bible after prayer, my eye rested on Revelations xx. 15, and this I fixed on, with dawnings of hope that *the Lord* would again speak by my unclean lips. I began from these sublime and awful words, 'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it,' &c., making some simple remarks on the throne—its greatness, its whiteness, &c. After prayer, I resumed, and spoke a little with an increasing sense of the divine presence and power on the rising of the dead, our individual rising and appearing at the dread bar of judgment, &c. We then prayed again, and in doing so I felt—more, perhaps, than since I came to Newcastle—as if a direct communication were opened between my soul and the Divine Mind. My heart was truly *drawn* out and up to God for the *advancement of Emmanuel's glory*, even more than for the salvation of guilty worms, as a *heart*-satisfying *end*. After this I got closer still to the people, and was enabled in a way quite new to me here, to open up the sins of the town, their deformity, their dreadful working, and inconceivably awful issues in eternity. I also found myself in an agony to compel sinners to come to Jesus *now*, and not even the next hour,

which I felt was not man's but God's. Indeed, I felt so much that I could almost have torn the pulpit to pieces, and the audience seemed to sympathize throughout. Oh! it was a glorious, an awfully glorious scene! .The fleecy clouds were showing here and there bright stars, and the harvest moon was diffusing a sombre peaceful light upon the quiet world around us. We dying, and yet immortal creatures were contemplating the eternity before us, looking to the appearance of the Son of Man in the clouds, conceiving ourselves placed at his bar, wondering and thinking what would be our sentence, and whether we would rise with him to heaven, or be drawn from him into hell; some were, I hope, opening their eyes to their awful destiny as sinners, and on the very point of seeking refuge for eternity from the wrath of God in the cleft Rock of Ages. I trust that some were saved, I have no doubt that God was with us of a truth. At a quarter to nine we closed; and as we had remained so long in the open air, I thought it better not to meet in the church as we intended, but to retire direct to our closets. After I had been a few minutes in the house, two friends came to me from the church, and told me that it was nearly full with a congregation entirely different from what I had had in the open air, and that they had been waiting for me since seven o'clock. I had again, accordingly, to go out in the Lord's name, and I spoke on the same as in the open air, though by no means with the same consciousness of the divine presence. We came out after a solemn meeting at a quarter to ten."

After visiting several other places in the north of England, and among others Sunderland, where he preached "to a dense and hungry audience, who seemed to open the mouth wide for the blessing," he returned to Scotland, in order to take the temporary charge of the congregation of St. Luke's, Edinburgh, in the absence of his valued

friend Mr. Moody Stuart. Of his labours here I am happy to be able to present the following graphic account from the pen of a friend to whom I have been already indebted, and who then watched his footsteps with deep and sympathetic interest:—

"In the winter of 1841–2 Mr. Burns supplied the pulpit of St. Luke's, Edinburgh. Mr. Moody Stuart, owing to an affection of the voice, had been advised to spend the winter in Madeira, and Mr. Burns was requested to take his place. He began his work in Edinburgh on the 14th November, preaching in the forenoon from 2 Co. iv. 1–6; and Dr. Bruce of St. Andrew's Church (of whom he always spoke with filial affection) in the afternoon.

"The work of this winter forms a unique chapter in his life. A special interest attaches to it. He had to become both pastor and evangelist. True to the motto of his family, "Ever ready," he soon showed that he could be both. He at once began a course of lectures on the Sabbath forenoon upon the Epistle to the Romans, and another course at the Thursday prayer-meeting upon the Epistle of James. On Monday evening he taught two classes: a female class for expounding the miracles, and a young men's class at a later hour, where he took up the parables of Christ. Every Saturday afternoon he conducted a class for children. Two courses of lectures—three classes—sermons upon the Sabbath afternoon suggested by the special circumstances of the times or of the congregation: here was sufficient work for an ordinary man. But he was no ordinary man. He was always longing to be on full work again. The college session

had begun. He taught a private Greek class in his lodgings.[1] The College Missionary Association met every Saturday morning for prayer and the reading of essays upon topics connected with foreign missions. He attended these meetings, and by the blessing of God infused his own fire into the hearts of many of the students. At the concluding general meeting of the Association, when about two hundred students were present, he moved one of the resolutions, and it was the universal impression that there never had been such a meeting in the college before.

"A large number of students attended his ministry—not only divinity students, but gownsmen of all stages with their pale eager faces. Memory recalls such names as Alexander James Campbell, John Donaldson, John Craven, Alexander Thain, Frederick Sandeman, Robert Ireland, Robert Taylor, Duncan Maclaren, M. Macgregor,[2] Walter Davidson, Donald Sutherland, Patrick Neill, William Balfour, Neil Macleod, A. Luke, Thomas Gardiner, Thomas Just, &c. He invited them to his lodgings; he sympathized with their difficulties; he guided those who were groping in the dark and seeking the way to Zion. Those who had the rare privilege of meeting him in private, and seeing his close walk with God, were at no loss to understand the power which attended his public ministrations.

[1] During the winter of 1844 he also taught a Hebrew class in the New College, for the benefit of the pupils of his revered friend, Dr. Duncan.

[2] Late minister of the Free Church, Gartly.

"With him the winning of souls was a passion; calm, but intense, consuming. As Foster has said of John Howard, 'It was the calmness of an intensity kept uniform by the nature of the human mind forbidding it to be more, and by the character of the man forbidding it to be less.' He cast his net into all waters. He wished to get access to the soldiers in the castle. He visited the barracks, distributed tracts, and invited them to his open-air services in the High Street. He frequently visited the Shelter, the jail, the bridewell, the Magdalene Asylum, the Orphan Hospital, the Dean Bank Institution, &c., and preached to the inmates. Wherever the lost or neglected were to be found he was there; like Him who yearned over a world plunged in sin, telling them of rest for the weary and hope for the guilty. From the very refuse of society he gathered jewels for Emmanuel's crown. Very touching to see him, as I have done, giving tracts and speaking tender words to the fallen. To him they were lost pieces of silver; and the thought that they might even yet have Christ for their brother, and heaven for their home, filled him with a tenderness which he had no name for.

"In the midst of his abundant labours in Edinburgh, the Lord opened a wide door for him in Leith. From January to March he preached on Wednesday and frequently on Sabbath evening in North Leith, South Leith, and the Mariners' Church, to densely crowded and (to use a favourite word of his own) 'hungry' audiences. The weather was severe—keen frost and snow—but the interest swelled and spread until the attendance even on the Wednesday evening was overflowing, and so deep

was the impression that the people could not go away after the blessing. An after-service for prayer and directing anxious inquirers had to be held; and such was their distress that they had to be removed to the vestry, where he sought to give them 'the oil of joy for mourning.' Mr. M'Cheyne took part in one of these services, and spoke and prayed with the anxious. It seemed as if the ever-memorable scenes of Kilsyth, Dundee, and Perth were to be repeated in Leith. So wide-spread was the impression, that a gay lady in Leith said the people were all going mad. In his young communicants' class he soon gathered in abundant fruits of his labours in Leith—sheaves of joy. To use his own words, "The Lord gave him spring, summer, and harvest, that winter in Leith." About the middle of March, in consequence of the resolution of the directors of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway to run trains upon the Sabbath, he 'bade the people of Leith farewell for a season, in order that he might give his whole heart to the work in Edinburgh.'

"One memorable incident which belongs to his work in Leith I must not omit. He wished to get access to the sailors. One Sabbath afternoon Dr. Gordon agreed to take his place in St. Luke's, and he ran down to preach on the quay at Leith, taking two or three of us with him to distribute tracts and invite the sailors. It was on the 2d January, 1842. He stood half-way between the upper and lower bridges. I was never more struck with his tact and fertility of resource. A large crowd assembled—a sea of bronzed faces. After reading his text—Ecclesiastes viii. 11: 'Because sentence against an evil work,' &c.—

it began to rain heavily. He paused, and prayed that God would restrain the clouds that the people might hear the word. The rain continued, however, and we adjourned to a large shed at the head of the quay. He resumed, and the rain ceased. I shall never forget the look of wonder with which that crowd gazed on the clear sky. They plainly felt that there is something deeper in prayer than is dreamed of in human philosophy. The preacher spoke as if he had spent his life before the mast: his skilful use of sea-phrases gave rare zest to his discourse —and, rising to a climax, he cried, 'Sailors! the breakers are ahead! the storm is rising! you are running upon a lee-shore! in a few moments the ship (the world) will strike and go down! The life-boat is Christ! It is lying alongside—it is ready to move off! Come away, sailors, come away, or it will be too late!'

"It was on Sabbath the 13th of March that the first Sabbath train was run between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Mr. Burns' spirit was stirred to its depths in connection with this question. His zeal for God and his love for his country were 'as a burning fire shut up in his bones.' He regarded the Sabbath as the palladium of Scottish Christianity. In name of the session of St. Luke's he wrote a remonstrance to the shareholders, setting forth the 'fearful iniquity' of trampling upon the sacred day, and the 'awful judgments' which it must inevitably bring down upon the land. He attended the two great meetings held in the Hopetoun Rooms and in the West Church by the friends of the Sabbath to oppose the opening of the railway; and spoke with great thankfulness of

the powerful speeches of Drs. Cunningham, Candlish, and C. J. Brown, and Messrs D. T. K. Drummond and Makgill Crichton, in favour of the entire sanctification of the Lord's-day. He preached for several Sabbaths upon the subject, and discussed it in all its aspects; he prayed with even more than his wonted fervour, that He who saith to the sea, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed,' would arrest the advancing tide of Sabbath desecration: and he intimated that he would preach at the railway-station every Sabbath at seven in the morning and at six in the evening —the hours at which the trains were advertised to start.

"True to his word, he was at the railway-station at seven o'clock on the following Sabbath morning. He spoke of it as 'a momentous day in the history of Scotland.' A great crowd assembled, and joined with deep solemnity in the service. It was after nine before they dispersed, some of them in tears. He conducted the ordinary services in St. Luke's, at eleven and two, with unusual tenderness and power, as if the morning service had only put a keener edge upon his spirit; and was at the railway-station again at six, surrounded by a dense concourse of several thousands. The station was then at the Haymarket, in the outskirts of Edinburgh, and as the *bruit* spread, the people poured out to hear this extraordinary man, as they once did to hear the Baptist in the wilderness. Like a soldier mounting the breach, or leading a forlorn hope, he stood upon a large stone, and sang the Psalm:—

'Horror took hold on me, because
Ill men thy law forsake,' &c.,

and preached one of his most characteristic sermons to a deeply impressed audience. He continued till nine o'clock in the evening, having been about nine hours engaged altogether. For the next three months his usual Sabbath work was four services—two at the railway-station and two in St. Luke's. He was often engaged for eight or nine hours—he often had to raise his voice so as to be heard by thousands; and yet he used to say that he was as fresh on Monday as on Saturday. He was 'a wonder to many.' Like Ezekiel, he was set for a sign. His brethren in Edinburgh were full of joy at his lion-like courage and noble testimony; and only wished that they had bodily strength to stand by his side. As he himself said, Even if no good was done to souls by these services, the lifting up of a bold testimony for the Lord's-day in the hearing of thousands, and in the face of the world, was a work worth living and dying for.

"So grave did he consider the crisis to be that he resolved to hold meetings for prayer every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at noon—to preach in the open-air at other points—and to turn his female class into an evangelistic service in the church. It is not easy even to recount his labours from this date. And instead of being worried or hackneyed, his soul, like Gideon's fleece, was drenched with dew, and his preaching was never marked by greater depth, variety, and freshness. It was the culminating point of his work in Edinburgh. The church was overflowing. The word was sharper than a two-edged sword. There was a Bethel-like fear over the congregation. Every head was bowed. It was felt that

'the living God was in the place.' Some who had entertained prejudices against the preacher were ashamed when they found that solidity and impressiveness were the leading characteristics of his teaching. At the spring communion two hundred joined from other congregations. In his young communicants' classes he met continually with deeply interesting cases of persons recently awakened, and heard of others. At the close of a Monday prayer-meeting some remained behind, who seemed to be under 'a divine convincing work;' and as they went away, one of the elders said with sparkling eyes, 'That's the Lord's work beginning.' And so it was. The day alone will declare the fruits of that winter's work. If the Spirit did not come down as a rushing mighty wind, yet the promise was fulfilled in abundant measure, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel.' What the old chronicler said of the effects of Richard Cameron's preaching, might be said of Mr. Burns' preaching on not a few of those Sabbaths in St. Luke's: 'The people fell into a state of calm weeping.'

"I have said nothing of his Sabbath-evening services in the Queen's Park, or of the solemn meetings he addressed at the end of the old Tolbooth Church in the High Street, where there were manifest tokens of the divine presence, and where beyond doubt fruit was gathered unto life eternal. I have said nothing of his quick eye in seizing opportunities of dropping a word in season, in the house and in the street, on coach or track-boat, to any one whom the thousand eddies and swirls of daily life threw in his way. I have said nothing of four evangelistic tours which he made in the midst of his Edinburgh work—one in

April, 1842, to Milnathort, Bridge of Earn, Perth, Burrelton, Collace, Abernyte, Dundee; another in June, to Dundee, Kilspindie, Anstruther, Logie, Cupar-Fife, and Falkland; and two in August and September to the Highlands of Perthshire. One recalls it with amazement. Here was a man who crowded the work of years into months—of months into weeks—of weeks into days. The work of many a lifetime was compressed into this single winter in Edinburgh. He often spoke as if he had a presentiment that his exhausting labours would soon wear out the earthly tabernacle, and he hasted to do the work of Him that sent him.

"My space is done, else I could give fragments of his 'Meditations' which I still vividly remember—morsels of living bread which the Master had blessed and broken. In digging in the field of the Word he threw up now and again great nuggets, which formed part of one's spiritual wealth ever after. A mind of keen insight and power—he was given to study subjects rather than texts, so that if he studied one text he sometimes preached from another—and always longing to resume those habits of close and consecutive study which he pursued until he was carried away by the tide. He was a great puzzle to students—his work, his circumstances, and his methods were so exceptional; but those who were so minded could learn from him the greatest lesson of all for the work of the ministry—the *omnipotence of faith and prayer*.

"For reasons which I suppress, I had the privilege of seeing him often in private—generally twice a week. Little notes, too, he used to send me; and although I

have lost them, their contents are written 'as if in star-fire' on my heart. Here is one. He had asked me to breakfast, but was unexpectedly called from home. He left a note expressing his regret, and adding, 'We are often disappointed in our meetings with man, but never in our meetings with God at a throne of grace, where we are ever welcome in the blood of Jesus.' In another, written from Dublin, he says—'May the Lord carry on his own great work within and around us, and may we be enabled to glorify him in life and in death!' The very last words, I think, I ever heard from him—standing at his father's door one night in 1854, under cold November skies—were, 'We must run!'"

Allusion has been made to those rapid excursions to other fields which occasionally interrupted the more even tenor of his labours at St. Luke's. Of the incessant and exhausting toil which such excursions involved no one acquainted only with the ordinary scenes of evangelistic work can easily form a conception. A single specimen, therefore, we must give, and we do so all the more readily that it will carry us back for a moment amid the scenes of his former labours in Breadalbane and Strathtay:—"To one with an exact knowledge of the geography of Perthshire," says the same eye-witness, to whom I am indebted for the above notices, "his labours during the week from Sabbath the 14th August, 1842, to Sabbath the 21st inclusive, furnish one of the most extraordinary episodes even in his life. There were no railroads then in Perthshire, but he had an interesting fellow-labourer in the shape of a fine fast trotter, as worthy

of the name of 'Church Extension' as Mr. M'Cheyne's pony. He was a famous rider, and sat his horse like a knight. On Sabbath the 14th he preached at Blair-Athole (1) for five hours in the churchyard to an assembly of at least 4000 persons, and (2) in the evening in the church for three hours to an audience that would have remained till daybreak. On Monday evening he rode to Moulin, and preached (3) to a deeply affected audience. On Tuesday he rode to Kinloch-Rannoch (20 miles), and preached (4) in a park at the south end of the bridge, from two to five o'clock, to an interesting congregation of shepherds, gamekeepers, foresters, graziers, cattle-dealers, &c., gathered from both sides of Loch Rannoch. After a hurried dinner he struck across the west shoulder of Schiehallion, one of the most trackless and difficult passes in the Highlands—taking a guide part of the way, to Fortingall (18 miles); rode six miles farther to Lawers, crossed Loch Tay to Ardeonaig—preached (5) there on Wednesday at twelve, and recrossing the lake preached (6) at Lawers the same evening. On Thursday he rode down to Grandtully (17 miles), and (7) preached with great power in the churchyard to a dense crowd from Hebrews xii. 18–25. On Friday he rode up to Fortingall (12 miles), where he preached (8) in the open air from two to nearly six p.m., a sermon (Hebrews ix. 27, 28), which made a deep impression, many of the audience being in tears; and returned to Grandtully the same evening. On Saturday morning he started at six for Balnaguard, preached (9) there at seven o'clock to a large company, many of whom had got saving good under his

ministry previously—caught the mail-cart at half-past eight, reached Edinburgh in the evening, and preached thrice (10, 11, 12) in St. Luke's on the following day.

"The congregation at Blair-Athole on the 14th," continues our informant, "was a most imposing sight. Most of them were men, and the ground being a dead level, and inconvenient for sitting, most of them stood. The thirst to hear was so intense, and the blessing which had crowned his previous visits so wide-spread, that almost the whole population, not only from the vale of Athole, but from Straloch, Strathardle, Kirkmichael, Glenerochy, Dalnacardoch, Foss, Glenfincastle, Strathtay, and Strath-tummel, flocked to hear the great preacher of repentance. As he read the opening Psalm. Ps. xxii. 27–31—

> 'All ends of th' earth remember shall,
> And turn the Lord unto,' &c.,

and during the first prayer, you felt as if the light of the other world struck on his face. His text was John xviii. 11, 'The cup which my Father,' &c.: and as he proceeded to explain the emblem, 'the cup,' he said, 'Wine is the strength or essence of the grape. God's wrath is his whole being *as directed against sin.* He looks upon sin as infinitely base and vile, and therefore he is indignant: and the wine of his holy anger is poured out *in all its strength* into the cup of his indignation. This wine was not diluted when the cup was put into the hand of the Son of God. Look at the anguish sin has wrought. The tears of mankind have never ceased to flow since it entered the world. No sooner do they dry on one cheek than they

begin to run down the other: no sooner does one widow lay aside her weeds, than another begins the wail: and yet *one diluted drop* of God's wrath has done it all. What anguish, then, must have been in the cup which the Father gave his Son to drink!' Words like these cut deep into many a heart that day. I saw a white-haired old man in the gate weeping bitterly, and saying, 'Oh! it's his prayers: I canna stand his prayers!'

"Those who could hardly speak a word of English understood him. An old person who literally did not know one word, and always sat on the pulpit stair when he preached, was asked, what was the use of *her* hearing Mr. Burns? 'Oh,' she replied, 'I can understand the Holy Ghost's English!"

Between the scenes now described and those to which we have next to refer, great and startling events had taken place. The ancient and venerable Church of Scotland, of which Mr. Burns had been an attached and faithful member, had been broken in pieces, and from its ruins had arisen a new and powerful society with which a large proportion of her most devoted sons had cast in their lot. With the movement which led to that remarkable revolution, and with the principles which lay at the foundation of it, he most thoroughly sympathized; and when the critical day of exodus arrived we find him hurrying away from the busy scenes of his evangelistic work in Fife, that he might witness that signal and illustrious act of faith, and share the inspiration and the triumph of that solemn hour:—"Tuesday," he writes in his journal, "to Edinburgh per steam through a great storm on the way to the

Assembly. Thursday, I was honoured to join in the solemn procession of ministers, &c., from St. Andrew's Church to the Free Assembly Hall, Canonmills, walking between my father on the one side and Uncle George of Tweedsmuir on the other. This was a scene of which I know not what to say! The opening of the Free Assembly was graciously solemn. Surely the Lord was there." But the scenes which immediately after followed, though deeply important and spirit-stirring, were not perhaps peculiarly favourable to the quiet prosecution of his special work. The country was all astir and filled with the din of ecclesiastical reconstruction and organization, and though this enthusiasm of church life and church work was itself of most wholesome influence on the general interests of religion in the country, and indeed, as it is believed, lent an impulse to the spiritual life of many, never to be forgotten, it was scarcely in unison with the peculiar mission of one whose one exclusive theme was that of repentance and the second birth. While therefore he still unweariedly prosecuted his appointed work wherever the divine Master seemed to point the way, he yet felt that the auspicious season for such work had in a great measure, at least for the present, passed. It was a time not so much for the awakening of life, as for the exercising and turning to good account of the life already awakened—a birth-time rather for the collective church than for individual souls. There was, indeed, abundant and most momentous work to be done, but work not precisely of that kind for which he felt himself especially fitted, and to which he believed himself to have

been by the irresistible call of God specially devoted. It was his part not to rear, or even materially to assist in rearing, the outward fabric of the house of God, but to help by God's grace in gathering the living stones of which it was to be reared. He was the more willing accordingly to listen to calls which were coming to him, with increasing frequency and urgency, from fields that lay beyond the sphere of the existing movement, and among these from Dublin, where he found himself on Saturday, April 6th, 1844, under the hospitable roof of his valued friend the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick, one of the ministers of Mary's Abbey Church. The following graphic and deeply interesting narrative, for which I am indebted to his kind host, will give some idea of the nature of his labours, and his manner of life in this new and untried field:—

"I had seen your brother in Perth, and had invited him to my house in Dublin. He accepted my invitation; and after he had finished his immediate engagements in Scotland he suddenly appeared at my door, with a small bundle in his hand, containing the whole of his travelling apparatus. His principal object in coming to Dublin was to find opportunities, if possible, of making known to Roman Catholics the message of the gospel. Accordingly, he selected as the place of his public labours a suitable piece of ground in front of the custom-house; a place in which Father Matthew had administered the temperance pledge, and where he could address his audience without obstructing the ordinary thoroughfare. This area was surrounded by a low chain fence, inside of

which he stood on a chair, and spoke to the people, who occupied the space between him and the building. Here he took his position evening after evening, and amidst innumerable annoyances and interruptions he sought to bring before his ignorant and prejudiced hearers the word of eternal life. It requires no small amount of courage, and tact, and temper, as every one knows who has made the trial, to address an unsympathizing or hostile Irish mob. Mr. Burns was exposed to many opprobrious salutations, derisive questionings, vehement denials of the statements which he made; sometimes the uproar was so loud and long-continued that he was obliged to desist altogether; often his clothes were torn; not seldom the chair on which he stood was broken; but he never was impatient, nor ever for a moment lost his self-command. Amidst the most noisy and turbulent scenes, his countenance was beaming with joy, insomuch that some of his persecutors were constrained to say, 'He is a good man; we cannot make him angry.' The ringleaders of the mob occasionally joined hands, and rushed down upon him for the purpose of driving him from the chair, or of throwing him down upon the street; but he was always protected from the danger of these assaults by a body-guard of three young men, members of my congregation, who were never absent from these meetings; and who, standing behind him, caught him in their arms till the wave had passed by and spent its force; and then, having set him on the chair again, he proceeded in his address with as much quietude of manner as if no interruption had taken place. The questions interjected by the crowd

from time to time, while he was perhaps in the middle of a sentence, were sufficient to perplex a speaker of less experience and of less self-control than Mr. Burns. Let me give some specimens of the style of interrogation to which he was subjected in the course of his addresses:—'What book is that which you hold in your hands?'—'It is the Word of God.' 'How do you know? can you prove that it is the Word of God?'—'I shall prove that it is if you deny it; but if we both of us admit it to be from God, why need I stop to prove it?' 'What is your commission?'—'I shall read it to you, my friends, 'Let him that heareth say, Come.' Eleven years have now passed since I heard the Lord speaking to my heart, and saying 'Come,' and ever since I have been saying 'Come' to as many sinners as were willing to listen to me.' 'You may go, we don't want you here.'—'My friends, it is to those who don't want me that I am always most anxious to go; for I find that they are the people who have most need of me.' 'Bravo!' shouted some one in the crowd, pleased with the readiness and appropriateness of the reply. 'From what country do you come?'—'From Scotland.' 'Have you no sinners there?'—'Yes.' 'Have you not much drunkenness in Scotland?'—'Yes, a good deal.' 'Why did you not stay at home to convert the drunkards before you came over to teach us?'—'For this reason, in Scotland the drunkards know that they are sinners, and do not attempt to justify themselves in their sins. But here I see people who curse, and drink, and tell lies, who say, nevertheless, that theirs is the true religion. Now these people must be labouring under a great mistake,

and I have come to set them right in this matter.' 'But *our* church is the true church, and we have our priests to teach us and to keep us right.'—'My friends, your saying that you are members of the true church does not prove that you really belong to it. Let me read you a passage from the Word of God. John viii. 39, 44: 'They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.' This passage fell upon them like a thunderbolt, and silenced them for a season, while the speaker in the meantime pursued his address. The scenes described in the Gospels under the preaching of the word were thus vividly illustrated, and to some extent re-enacted, under the ministry of Mr. Burns.

"On one occasion he proposed to vary the commencement of his open-air service by the singing of a psalm. I endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, by representing to him, that as his audience knew nothing of our metrical psalms, nor of our psalmody, his attempt to sing would serve but to increase and embitter the spirit of opposition. He was anxious, however, to make the experiment, and announced the 62d Psalm. After reading a portion of the psalm, he commenced to sing the 5th verse,

'My soul, wait thou with patience
Upon thy God alone.'

The crowd, taken by surprise, listened to the first line in mute astonishment; then burst into a laugh of derision;

then forming themselves into a compact phalanx, they rushed down upon Mr. Burns just as he had completed the first two words of the second line. The three friends, who were ever near, drew him aside till the crowd swept by, and after a considerable interval placed him once more upon the chair; and he then with his usual composure resumed the tune at the part of the line, 'thy God alone,' which he had reached before he was interrupted.

"One evening, when he was obliged to stop short in his discourse in consequence of his chair being broken, he went down along the quay on the other side of the river, for the purpose of addressing himself to the coal-porters. It was in vain that his friends represented the danger to which he would be inevitably exposed; he replied, that 'he had never known fear.' His courage was soon put to the test. Whenever he commenced to speak, an angry mob quickly assembled, and loud and threatening shouts drowned all his efforts to be heard. The police came to his assistance, and kindly but firmly required him to cease. Still he was unwilling to give up the attempt, but after several ineffectual efforts, the mob becoming larger and more ferocious, the police peremptorily insisted that he should be silent and cross the river in the ferry-boat, 'for if you attempt to go back along the quay,' they said, 'we will not be answerable for your life.' 'But I cannot pay for the ferry-boat.' 'It will cost you only a halfpenny.' 'But I have no halfpenny,'[1] he replied. 'Here is one for

[1] See note, page 225; also, a touching incident in his journal of date October 11th, 1847 (Chapter xii.), illustrating how literally he carried with him "neither purse nor scrip," &c. It might be said

you,' said a good-natured policeman. Accordingly Mr. Burns stepped down into the boat, and holding up the halfpenny, he cried out to the people on shore, 'See this, my friends, I have got a free passage. In like manner you may have a free gospel, a free forgiveness of all your sins, a free passage to the kingdom of heaven. Without money, and without price.' And thus he proceeded to deliver a message to the persons who were crossing with him in the boat.

"It is not to be concluded from these details, that his labours in this arduous field were wholly unsuccessful. One Sabbath morning, his audience at the custom-house were more quiet than usual. His subject was regeneration, 'Except a man be born again,' &c. At the close of his sermon a man who had been listening attentively said, 'Well, sir, if what you have said be true, you had much need to come from Scotland to tell it to us, for we never heard of this doctrine before.' After Mr. Burns left Dublin, several Roman Catholics came to inquire about him, speaking respectfully of his labours, and of the loving and genial spirit in which they were conducted.

"During his stay in Dublin we had prayer-meetings in the church of Mary's Abbey almost every day. The prayers of Mr. Burns were very striking—distinguished by deep acquaintance with Scripture, by intense fervour,

of him, with absolute truth, during this period, in which, in the matter of temporal provision, he so simply walked by faith, that "when he had gathered much he had nothing over, and when he had gathered least he had no lack." He had never too much for himself and for the poor, and never too little for himself.

and by strong faith. He truly pleaded with God, and occasionally seemed to get near access to his presence. But his addresses to our Presbyterian people failed to produce much visible impression. His failure in this respect disappointed and grieved me very much. The congregation looked forward to his promised visit with much interest; having been largely informed of the wonderful success which God had vouchsafed to him in many districts of Scotland, they expected to hear from him a fuller exposition, and a more specific application of scriptural truth, than he was wont to give; and they were somewhat dissatisfied to observe that his discourses appeared to be wholly extemporaneous. I tried to induce him to give some time to special preparation, but without success, and regarding his course of procedure as beyond the range of ordinary men, I forbore to press my objections. I continued, however, to think that he was mistaken in expecting that his word would be with power when he did not beforehand consider how to divide and to apply it; and that he was also mistaken in attributing his want of success, as he was at that time accustomed to do, solely and exclusively to the hardness of the hearts of the people. His views on these points, I think I have since learned, subsequently underwent considerable change; and I am sure that he was prepared to adopt any means which appeared to him most directly and effectively to bear on the advancement of the kingdom of God. This great object alone engrossed him. Political or even ecclesiastical affairs had no attraction for him. He was bent earnestly and ever on the salvation of souls.

This grand concern occupied and absorbed his daily prayers, his social converse, his public addresses, the whole course of his thoughts, the whole business of his life. Why are there not more of us like him? The need of such men is as urgent as ever; and we know that the grace of God is not less rich, nor his promises in Christ less sure, nor his gifts less varied or less rich. 'Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief.'"

The following brief snatch of reminiscence by a respected minister of the Free Church of Scotland,[1] gives another vivid touch to the picture, and affords a pregnant hint as to the unseen results of those despised and self-denying labours:—

"I only saw him once in Dublin. I was then a student in Trinity College, and I remember well, passing along by the custom-house I came upon a crowd, which as I drew near appeared greatly excited. I stopped to listen, and I found that William Burns (as I afterwards came to know) was addressing them. I think I see him still: with what a strange calmness he spoke! with what meekness he met all their taunts! He was hooted, pelted, insulted, but quite unmoved he held open his Bible, and answered every onset by saying, 'But hear me, hear what God says to us in his blessed Word.' I remember he was speaking from John x. concerning the good Shepherd and the door of the sheepfold. At times the crowd were quieted down to listen, and *one* at least of the hearers walked away, forgetting for the time Greek iambics and mathematical deductions, but filled with the thought, 'That stranger has

[1] The Rev. H. M. Williamson, Free High Church, Aberdeen.

a peace and a life of which I know nothing.' Next time we met was at the Duchess of Gordon's, Huntly Lodge, on his return on a visit from China; and I have never forgotten that happy season, or his last words, as, entering the railway-carriage, he said, 'Now for China!'"

One or two characteristic extracts from his own journal will carry us still deeper into the heart of the combat and of the combatant.

"*At 34 Wellington Street, Dublin, Rev. W. B. Kirkpatrick's. Monday, April 8th.*— . . . On Saturday, after being here an hour or two, I thought of going to preach in the open air, but on going through the streets thought it better to wait a little until my way should open more gradually. Yesterday I preached for Mr. Kirkpatrick at twelve, on 'Go ye into all the world,' &c., and in the evening in Adelaide Road Church, on John iii.: regeneration. I had assistance on both occasions, and in coming home at night spoke to numbers. I found them a very engaging people, very open and frank, and accessible to kindness. O that Jesus may be glorified among them! . . . This evening I felt the hand of the Lord laid upon me so powerfully that I could not but go forth to attempt entering fairly on his work. I went down to the quay to look out for a suitable place to preach, and having found one I tried to begin, urged by his word, 'Preach the word,' &c. The enmity which even the attempt to open my mouth provoked showed what I may look for if I do the Lord's will. When I asked some sailors if they would attend they seemed disposed, but shrunk away, saying, 'This is a bad part of the world, for there are too many on the other side of the house.' In coming away to the meeting in the chapel I asked the Lord to direct me to some true child of God—not a minister—who might go with me when I next attempt this work, and as soon as I got to the church I was introduced to one of the elders, who seems the very

person. After the meeting, again I met with another, who seems equally desirable. The meeting was very sweet. I spoke a little on the account of Hagar and her son, Genesis xxi., prayed, and was followed by Mr. K. in prayer. He is a man of genuine piety and very considerable power.

"*Tuesday Evening.*—During this day my path has opened a little, or rather not a little, farther. During the former part of the day I wrote letters to Scotland. Was alone with the Lord, and also traversed the city that I might get a full view of its character, naturally and morally, which is always most easily done before you become known. I conversed with Mr. Drysdale, the elder to whom I alluded above as a man of God. . . . I spent an hour with him in his workshop alone. He gave me an awful account of the difficulties of out-door preaching in Dublin; but after much converse I felt that I must make the attempt. He would gladly have gone with me, but was engaged this evening at the great meeting in connection with the Presbyterian marriage question, and thus I was left quite alone. However I went, looking to the Lord, and took up my position on the open ground to the west of the custom-house, laid my hat on the ground, and standing a few paces from the footpath began to read, 'It is appointed unto men once to die,' &c. I had soon a large and most interesting assembly, but, as usual, the Romanists introduced their questions, and when the answers came too near them they began to make a rush with the view of putting me down. A police-officer also came and advised me to remove. I said I believed that I was trespassing no law—that that was the ground where Father Matthew spoke—and that I would not remove unless he had authority to stop me. He seemed to be a Romanist, and was evidently set on putting me down, so that after throwing the responsibility on him, and telling the people where I would preach to-morrow, I came away with a disburdened conscience. Dear people! they seemed intent on hearing, and followed me far on my way home despite of all I could do. . . .

"*Friday, April 12th.*—Half-past one o'clock this morning I awoke under a powerful assault of despondency and unbelief—tempted to say, Let me sit still and take things in the ordinary way. However, at worship, the fifth chapter of Hebrews, read by Mr. K., particularly the words, 'Be followers of them who through *faith* and *patience* are now inheriting the promises,' quickened me again. We had some interesting conversation on the need of perseverance, and of in this taking a lesson from O'Connell; and at half-past nine I went down in the name of Jesus to the scene of last night's meeting. I asked one captain to give me his ship to preach in, but he refused. I was then standing in doubt to what ship to go to next when I saw some poor Romanists—emigrants, I suppose—on board another vessel, who seemed to know me, and were mocking. I asked them how they were so unwilling to hear the Word of God; they said they loved it, but not from me—that I could not preach it, &c. This opened the way. With all their confidence they mingled many oaths, which I told them certainly showed that they were not on the right way. A crowd gathered, and I had the best hour among them that I have had in Dublin. I was greatly aided in gaining their confidence. They threatened to throw me into the river at first, but I told them I did not mind that—they treated my Master worse. One asked me for my commission; I pointed to 'Let him that heareth say, Come.' One said something vile; I said, 'You know that when you go to confession you must confess that as a sin.' Another, hearing of confession, and thinking that I was speaking against it, said, 'What do you know about confession?' &c.; I said, 'Not much; but I am saying no more than I know,' and repeated what he had said. He was pleased. One said, 'You must be saved by prayer and fasting;' I affirmed it, but showed the infinitely higher place of the blood of Jesus. One pressed me to prove that the Bible was the Word of God, wishing to bring me under church authority; I said I would do so if he denied it, but that as

we both admitted this, why should I prove it, and so we got to more practical and personal matters. I was so full of God's joy in all this that I could not but smile, or rather laugh, in speaking to them; they wondered at this, and said, 'He is a good man, we cannot make him angry.' I told them I would come back again at the dinner-hour and speak again; and so we parted. This was a good beginning. At twelve we had a very good prayer-meeting; and all that seems needful is faith, and patience, and prayer. I am just about to return again to the field; but ah! I must go deeper this time, and be prepared for the worst that the enemy can devise or execute. 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the *word* of their testimony; and *they loved not their lives unto the death.*' Oh! to be enabled thus to fight and overcome!

"*Evening.*—The public duty of the day is now over, and I have abundant cause to sing of mercy. At the dinner-hour I got a good many to hear, and had increasing assistance. In the evening I got free of all controversies, and spoke with divine relish on the love of God: 'God commendeth his love toward us,' &c. We met with some opposition; among other things, some one threw a pailful of water at me from a ship's side, but it did not harm me. The impression was greater than before, and though the policeman who first put me down came near, he did not interfere. They are a very interesting people, and if I be faithful to the Lord's call I doubt not to see some or many of them obeying the gospel. It is now near to the end of my first week in Ireland, and I have indeed cause to thank the Lord that so soon I should be within sight of so full and blessed a work.

"*Saturday, April 13th.*—. . . This day I have kept as a day of rest, with the exception of having a prayer-meeting at twelve o'clock, at which I read Isaiah xliii., and felt something of his presence. This day has been wet, so that I have had less unwillingness to defer my public engagements until to-morrow. During the chief part of this evening

I have been led to look afresh at the dark side of my prospects, and so have felt as if nothing could be done; but again I am revived by God's own perfect words. I have just come to my room from family worship, where Hebrews vii. 18 to the end was read. I saw something of his glory as a priest, and had some nearness and fulness of heart in prayer, and have again a renewal of hope regarding this poor city. I found to-day also that hope and expectation is springing up in the hearts of some of God's children who at first despaired of anything being done. Last night I told those who disturbed us that I knew well that 'the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison,' but that we would specially pray for them, and that God would fulfil his word, 'He stilleth the tumult of the people.' They seemed struck at this; I added, I will get you all very quiet yet before I leave you. Nothing gives one so great an opening as joy, and love, and peace; and I find these poured into my heart when among these poor outcasts in an uncommon measure. Many of the emigrants who in the morning cursed me hung upon my lips in the evening. One poor woman said, 'Ah! I see the tear of mercy in his eye.' When they made any commotion I said, 'Now, the policeman will stop us;' and they became as quiet as the river beside us."

He returned to Scotland on May 10th, and after three months of evangelistic work, chiefly in Paisley, Port-Glasgow, Renfrew, and other neighbouring places, proceeded to the British dominions of North America, where we shall have in the next chapter to trace his footsteps.

CHAPTER X.

1844–1846.

CANADA.[1]

OUR North American colonies had something like a hereditary claim on the services of Mr. Burns. It has been the lot of two of his near relatives to be engaged for a series of years in the service of the church

[1] This chapter was kindly prepared by the late Rev. Robert Burns, D.D., professor of theology in Knox's College, Toronto, than whom none knew the field of labour better, or had done more to advance the work of Christ throughout its length and breadth. It is given with only such revision as the revered author would himself have given to it had he been spared to impart to it his final touch. Besides him, and chiefly through him, I am indebted also to the following friends who have assisted in furnishing the materials on which the narrative is based, viz. Rev. Alexr. Cameron, of the Free Church, Ardersier, formerly of Canada; Mr. Hector Macpherson, lay missionary at St. Martin's, Perthshire, formerly band-major of the 93d Sutherland Highlanders; Rev. Daniel Clark, of Indian Lands, Glengarry, Canada; Mr. Donald Catanach, of Lochiel, and his sister, Mrs. Kelly; Rev. Alexr. N. Somerville, of Anderston Free Church, Glasgow; Sergeant Long, formerly of the 93d, now of the Gymnasium, Glasgow; Mr. James Hosack, merchant, Quebec; the Rev. John Clugston, formerly of that city, now of Stewarton; Mr. William Macintosh, now of Belleville, C.W.; Rev. Farquhar M'Rae of Knockbain; Mrs. M'Nider, formerly of Montreal, now of Vincent Street, Edinburgh; Messrs. James Court, John Dougal, Thos. Allan, James Orr, R. M'Corkle, Montreal, and Farnham.

in that important and thriving province of the British crown. His uncle, Dr. George Burns, of the Free Church at Corstorphine, was in 1817 called to be the first minister of the Church of Scotland in the city of St. John, New Brunswick, and, with a short interval, he laboured in that important sphere for the period of fourteen years; while another uncle, Dr. Robert Burns, formerly of Paisley, was for fifteen years secretary to the Glasgow Society for sending out Ministers and Teachers to the Colonies of British North America, and was himself for a quarter of a century employed, first as pastor, and afterwards as theological professor, at Toronto, in Canada West. The latter having arrived at Montreal in the spring of 1844 as one of the first deputies of the young, fresh, and already renowned Free Church of Scotland, the question was at once put to him, "Have you brought your nephew with you?" In fact, the revivals in Scotland were more spoken of in Canada than in Scotland itself, and the Free Church deputy carried home with him earnest commissions from the good people of Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, and almost everywhere, for the presence and labours of Mr. Burns, and others of similar spirit. Written communications to the Colonial Committee at Edinburgh had also preceded him; and when he reached Scotland in June of that year, he found that the proposal to visit Canada had been made to Mr. Burns, and that proposal having been seconded by the full information now given him, all difficulties were removed, and in the course of a few weeks Mr. Burns embarked in the brig *Mary* for Montreal, a free passage to and from

Canada having been guaranteed to him by the generous Christian proprietors of the vessel. Mr. Burns sailed from Greenock to Montreal on the 10th August, 1844, and reached Montreal on Thursday, September 26th, of the same year. In this connection the names of Mr. James R. Orr, merchant in Montreal, and of Captain Kelso, the commander and proprietor of the vessel, deserve honourable mention. With the first of these gentlemen Mr. Burns stayed during the greater part of his residence in Montreal; and the names of both are associated with the first propitious dawning of the Free Church era in Canada.

The following extracts from his journal will show the feelings with which he approached this new sphere of labour, and the spirit in which he entered on it:—

"In every circumstance, even to the least, I have seen infinite grace towards me on this occasion. The ship in which I am is an excellent one. As there is no cabin passenger but myself, I have the cabin as quiet as my own study could be, and a state-room in which to meet with God. The means provided for me by the Lord have so exactly met my wants, that I go forth truly 'without purse,' having only two shillings remaining in the world; and yet I am infinitely rich, 'having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'[1] I trust I shall be enabled not only to pray much, but also to study more deeply the divine word, and prepare more regularly for the profitable discharge of my awful trust. . . . I have got some beginning made among the crew. To-night we had fine

[1] See note, p. 225.

weather, and met on deck for worship. It was sweet and solemn, the voice of prayer and praise blending with the winds in the midst of the mighty deep. Oh that I may be prepared for glorifying God fully in my body and spirit, which are his!" On another occasion he says: "To-day we have been becalmed, and I feel the retirement sweet. I think I can say through grace that God's presence or absence alone distinguishes places to me. But ah! I am yet untried. I know but little of what is in me as yet, and still less of the depth of his redeeming love. . . . I have sometimes had glimpses both of the depth of sin and of redeeming love; still, I will need very special teaching if I am to be of use in the western world. . . .

"*September* 2, 1844.—This morning beautifully clear; a gentle north-east breeze, wafting us to our desired haven, brought us in sight of American land, after a delightful run of twenty-three days. . . . Our seasons of divine worship have been increasingly pleasant of late, although I see no mark of a divine work of grace in any one around me. Part of my daily work has been to teach the ship-boys to read. One of them is an interesting black from Africa. Oh that my heart were enlarged in pleading for the ingathering of all nations to Emmanuel!"

On September 10th he reached Quebec, and in his journal we find the following characteristic notice:—"In God's great mercy we arrived here yesterday, after a delightful passage of thirty-six days. As it was the day of holy rest, I did not go ashore, but had worship on board, and spoke on the twenty-second chapter of

Revelation. In the evening I was put on shore, and after looking a little at the aspect of the town, I took up my position alone, and yet not alone, at the market-place, close to the river, and began to repeat the fifty-fifth of Isaiah. A crowd of Canadians and of British sailors soon gathered, who at first seemed mute with astonishment, but soon showed me that the offence of the cross had not ceased by their mocking and threatened violence. However, I got a good opportunity of witness-bearing for God and his Christ; and when I left them had some interesting conversation with some individuals who followed me. When I came down again, at half-past eight, to the place where the ship's boat was to meet me, I got into conversation with a company of young sailors, two of whom remembered well having heard me at Newcastle at the quay and in the corn-market. Some of our poor soldiers and sailors were going about intoxicated. Though it were only to reach these two classes of degraded men, it would be to me a reward for crossing the great ocean. Who knoweth what may be the fruit of this evening's testimony among the wondering crowd! . . . I have had on board the ship a time for solemn observation of the character and ways of the unconverted, which I trust will be profitable. The only book I have had with me beside the book of God is Owen on the *Glory of Christ*, which I find precious indeed. I have had some seasons of great nearness to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have found his word full of power and refreshment."

On reaching Montreal he at once found himself in the

midst both of new and of old friends. The faces of the old soldiers whom he had known at Aberdeen and at Dundee must have been a sight peculiarly pleasant to him, and a happy omen for the future:—

"When we came into the harbour two Christian gentlemen, Mr. Orr and Mr. M'Kay, came on board, and before leaving my little cabin we had sweet communion at the mercy-seat together. I live with Mr. and Mrs. Orr, a godly couple from Greenock, in a delightful situation at the head of the town. Truly goodness and mercy are heaped on me. . . . Before leaving Scotland I observed that the 93d Regiment, the depot of which I laboured among at Aberdeen in autumn, 1840, had removed from Kingston to Montreal, and I trusted that somehow I might get in among them; but what was my joy and wonder to be told that there were about thirty godly men among sergeants and privates who have a hired room near the barracks in which some of them teach a daily school for poor children gathered from the streets, as well as a Sabbath-school, and in which they meet for social prayer every Friday from six to half-past eight. This is the Sutherland regiment, of which in its early days the Rev. Ronald Bayne, an eminent man of God—afterwards at Inverness, and then at Elgin—was chaplain; and that enjoyed until lately the command of Colonel M'Gregor, a distinguished Christian officer, now at the head of the constabulary force of Dublin. . . . I had hardly arrived when I was told they were looking with desire to my coming, and that they wished me to attend their prayer-meeting, and to preach to them next Sabbath. I accordingly went last night, in company with two pious Scotchmen. . . . When we got to the place I found such a scene as I never before saw: a room crowded with soldiers, wives, and children, who were met not to hear a man speak, but to wait upon Jehovah, as their custom was. It put me in mind of the centurion of old. I enjoyed the meeting exceedingly, speaking upon Moses at the burning bush. One

of the soldiers prayed, as well as Mr. M'Intosh and myself. In the soldier's prayer I was struck by the petition that they might cherish such expectations of good through my instrumentality as were warranted by his word, and were according to his mind. They seemed all to feel too that nothing but the presence of God himself would be of any avail. I found it very affecting to them and me to allude to the church of our fathers in the furnace, and to the people of Ross and Sutherland, from among whom the regiment was at first raised. . . .

"*Tuesday, September 24th.*—*Sabbath* was a good day, sufficient to remind me of September 22d, 1839, the day of the second communion at Kilsyth. At half-past nine A.M. I preached on the quay, on the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and his purging the temple—congregation large and fixed. At eleven I preached in Mr. Wilks's church (Congregational) from the words, 'When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.' At half-past one P.M. I addressed the 93d Regiment in Mr. Esson's church—very fixed in their attention—more so than I have seen soldiers before. At seven I again preached in Mr. Esson's to a full church, on 'If any man will come after me,' &c., and was much aided.

"*Saturday, December 14th.*—During the present week my work has gone on as before, but in addition my conflicts in soul about it have been deeper than before, and several new doors have been opened. (1.) Two hundred and fifty of the 71st Regiment have come to the cavalry barracks, whom I visited on Tuesday and Friday, and whom I am to see again on Tuesday, if the Lord will. It seems very remarkable that the 93d and 71st Regiments are the only ones whose depots I visited in Scotland, and that the whole of the 93d and so many of the 71st should now be here. I have met with a number of the 71st whom I knew well in Dundee, and this prepares my way among them. (2.) I have got liberty and more than liberty from the commanding officer of the 89th

(Irish) Regiment to meet with the men in their schoolroom from week to week. This seemed so unlikely, as he is said to be a Romanist, that I had given up thoughts of applying, but one of the men in the hospital wanted me to ask a favour for him, and this gave me an introduction. (3.) We have got most wonderfully the use of a large room exactly opposite the French church for holding meetings in, both in French and English—all for nothing—the owner being a friend of the gospel—a hearer of Dr. Carruthers the Independent, whose church met for a long time in this very place. This seems a remarkable arrangement, as it is the very best place in the city for reaching the people."

When the Free Church was opened at Côte Street, Montreal, the soldiers of the 93d had a distinct service allotted to them in the afternoon. On the arrival of Mr. Burns this service devolved on him; but besides preaching to the entire regiment on the Sabbath, he preached twice during the week in one of the largest rooms in the barracks; and he went frequently to the regimental hospital to address the sick and speak to the patients personally. Such was the high estimation in which he was held by soldiers both of that and of other regiments and of different denominations, that on several occasions when men of the regiment were sick, Englishmen and Irishmen, Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, have sent to him earnest messages soliciting his visits and his prayers. To quote the words of Mr. Hector Macpherson, then sergeant-major of the band of the regiment (now a lay-missionary at St. Martin's, Perthshire): "I shall never forget the first sermon he preached on the first Sabbath after his arrival. He gave out in the usual

way the 32d Psalm to be sung, and had read the first four lines, when he began to unfold the feelings and experience of a penitent believer, in a way, to me at least, never opened up before nor since, and which was to my afflicted spirit as good news from a far land. It was like oil and wine to my afflicted spirit. It was also greatly blessed to others of my fellow-soldiers. The man of God continued to address us in much freedom of heart and of power for three hours, concluding somewhat abruptly, but with words which indicated a spirit of winning affection to every one: 'I see your time is up, but I hope to have farther opportunities of addressing you,' and solemnly pronounced the apostolic benediction."

The many opportunities of hearing Mr. B., enjoyed by the men of the 93d Regiment, were eagerly improved by them; and the following description of the bearing of his preaching upon them, and which has been drawn by one of themselves, then a non-commissioned officer, is singularly graphic:—"I have known the Rev. W. C. B. to send this famous regiment, these heroes of Balaclava, home to their barracks, after hearing him preach, every man of them less or more affected; not a high word, or breath, or whisper heard among them; each man looking more serious than his comrade; awe-struck, 'like men that dreamed they were;' and when at home, dismissed from parade, they could not dismiss their fears. Out of thirty men, the subdivision of a company under my charge, living in the same room, only *five* were bold enough that Sunday evening to go out to their usual haunts; and these must go afraid, as if by stealth, their consciences so

troubled them; the other twenty-five, each with Bible in hand, bemoaning himself. Now, looking at the whole regiment from what took place in this *one* room of it, you may be able to judge of Mr. B.'s powers as an ambassador of Christ with clear credentials!"

While in the city of Montreal, and freely proclaiming the riches of grace in churches, and barrack-rooms, and hospitals, Mr. Burns found the field too narrow; and he went out to the highways, and streets, and squares of the city which was the especial scene of his apostolic labours. For the first two or three nights there was little opposition, but the majority of his hearers being Roman Catholics, the priests were made aware of what was going on and became alarmed, and violent opposition was the issue. He never indeed used the word Popery, nor any term directly marking the system, or calculated to give needless offence; but his finger, it would seem, touched the sore parts of the malady; and the effect was just as of old, when the men that turned the world upside down were assailing the strongholds of heathen superstition and sin. He writes in his journal:—

"*Tuesday, September 24th.*—Evening at seven in open air in *Place d'Armes*, in the centre of the city, in front of the great Romish cathedral. The proposal of this tried some spirits among us. When I went a considerable number had assembled, and among them a band of the 93d. I had a fine opportunity, and felt the power of the living God with us. Towards the end our enemies made a commotion. The mayor of the city, a Roman Catholic, came to stop me, but was restrained by God. As we retired about half-past nine we were mobbed, chiefly as usual through the excessive fears of

friends seeking to guard me from violence. The mayor offered his protection, but I said to the people in his presence, 'No one will harm me—it is my own friends who are creating groundless alarm. I would ask all to go quietly home, and if any one is my enemy he will give me his arm and we will go together.' They quietly moved away. I put my hand on my white neckcloth and moved on unknown to the multitude. If the kingdom of Satan is to be disturbed here, this is but the shadow of what will yet come, and then shall many be offended. . . .

"*Friday, September 27th.*—At half-past five in *Place d'Armes*, awfully mocked and pelted, though with nothing deadly, yet got much truth delivered both while here and after going to an adjoining street, where a gentleman walking with me was struck on the back. While in the *Place d'Armes*, one of the magistrates, evidently, I think, a Romanist, came and ordered me to remove, threatening me with the exercise of his power if I did not. I said I was doing no harm, and would continue, and that he might take me to prison if he pleased; I was ready. He shrunk away and left me to go on. I feel that standing thus in the breach, though it may have no other effect, invigorates my own faith, lifts a testimony honouring to God, and sets me on a high vantage-ground in preaching in the churches. . . .

"*Saturday, September 28th.*—This evening I was again in the field about six o'clock. A great number assembled, and, in contrast with the previous night, they seemed to have ears given them to hear. This continued for some time, but afterwards they began to throw gravel, &c., and to jostle me in the crowd. Little evil might have come of this, had not some who befriended me as a Scotchman sought to save me from danger; and thus my back being turned the crowd rushed on me, and I got away without my hat and one of the tails of my coat containing a handkerchief and Bible. Their enmity was so great that I believe the Bible was torn to pieces as well as the rest, the hat only being recovered. I got into a

shop, where many who trembled for me would have had me to remain, but I was quite above all fear, and went out again alone among the people, and got much opportunity of declaring the truth on the way home. Surely these displays of enmity are a token that the Prince of darkness is in some degree afraid!"

These furious onsets are described by eye-witnesses as having been most terrible, and as having more than once threatened serious consequences. Thus, on one occasion, that evidently referred to in one of the above extracts, his coat was torn, his hat was knocked off and trampled on the ground; and his pocket-Bible, his constant companion, torn from his hand. On the other, a stone thrown with violence inflicted a severe wound on his cheek, and it bled freely. A few of the 93d rushed through the crowd, and one in anxiety said, "What's this? what's this?" Smiling, he replied, "Never mind, it's only a few scars in the Master's service." He was carried into the medical chamber of Dr. Macnider, near at hand, when that beloved Christian physician skilfully sewed up the wound. He came forth speedily as if nothing had taken place; and looking round calmly from his reassumed position, he exclaimed in the words of the great apostle of the Gentiles:—"I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

Another hot day of battle is thus vividly described by the Rev. William Arnot, of the Free High Church, Edinburgh, who happened to be in Montreal at the same time, and who himself bravely joined him on the forlorn hope. "Once," he writes, "I went with him to the Haymarket

Square, where he meant to preach in English. I went somewhat anxious for his safety, with intent to help him if need should arise. A circle soon gathered. He began to preach. More assembled outside—thicker and thicker the girdle grew, but the roughest were outside. William and I stood alone in the middle of the ring, hedged very closely in, but the gentlest nearest us. Where they stood at first, they remained. No possibility of movement. Noise and throwing of dirt increased. When he became somewhat wearied I now and then took up the address, and the change of voice operated a little in our favour for getting a hearing. One Irish voice from the outside interrupted William at one time, shouting clear over all the din, 'The devil's dead.' A great laugh followed. When it hushed, William struck in with a plaintive voice, tinged almost with the sarcastic, 'Ah! then, you are a poor fatherless child!' This raised a laugh in his favour, and under cover of it he was enabled to proceed for a while. We were besmeared with mud, thrown from the outer circles, but not hurt.

"The violent opposition of the Irish, however, eventually drove him off. He desisted, as the first missionaries did, when the persecution became violent, and went to another city."

At length the hostile Romanist mayor was replaced in his office by another of different spirit—an excellent Protestant gentleman, of the Wesleyan body, who lent the full weight of his authority and moral support to the cause of order and of peace. Appearing seasonably at one of the meetings where tumultuous disturbances were appre-

hended, he speedily succeeded in calming the storm, and the assembly soon dispersed without injury to any one. Thereafter he waited on Mr. Burns for consultation on the case. As soon as he had stated the object of his visit, said Mr. Burns, "Let us pray;" when as they knelt together he touched the mayor on the shoulder and said, "You'll pray." He did pray, asking the divine direction, and a blessing on the labours of Mr. Burns, and left him with the single request that he would send him notice when and where he would next preach.

The city of Montreal was only one, though perhaps the most important scene of Mr. Burns' Canadian labours. His mission was to the whole dominion of Canada, which may be considered now as including, or as designed to include, all the dependencies of the British crown in North America. In 1844 the name embraced only two branches of one province, Canada East and Canada West; the former being now termed the province of Quebec, and the latter that of Ontario. Lower Canada was then, as it had been for ages and still is, settled by French Canadians, speaking the French language, and subject to debasing superstition and a dominant priestcraft. The whole land groans under the tyrannical sway of perhaps the most wealthy and powerful hierarchy under the dominion of the see of Rome. We have no doubt that in seeing their splendid palaces, their magnificent cathedrals, colleges, and convents; in seeing the lovely land almost wholly "given to idolatry," the spirit of Mr. Burns was greatly stirred within him. Hence the interest he took, all the time he was in Canada, in the

state of the poor "habitants," the benighted French Canadian Roman Catholics; and hence the avidity and the success with which, as we shall presently see, he revived his knowledge of the French language, so as to be able, in a comparatively short space of time, to speak intelligibly and fluently in the French tongue.

Canada West, or Ontario as it is now called, may be termed a Protestant country, inhabited too no doubt by many Roman Catholics especially from Ireland, and by not a few settlers from Germany and the United States; but unquestionably the English and the Scottish elements greatly preponderate. The leading Protestant denominations are, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists. Of these, the first three are each nearly equal in point of numbers, amounting to not much less than one million in all. The population of the whole "Dominion," including Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, is estimated at four millions. Prior to the era of the Disruption in 1843, the state of our countrymen in Canada was anything but promising. The framework of a Presbyterian church was indeed set up, and a number of pious ministers had been from time to time sent out both by the Establishment and the Secession; and the annals of the early Presbyterian church are adorned with a few noble names. Generally speaking, however, the system was cold, formal, and stiff; and spiritual religion in the line of Scottish Presbyterianism was low. The Disruption wrought wonders for Canada. Many pious men in the cities and in the land generally sighed for a change; and the arrival of deputies from the Free

Church in regular succession for five years, formed quite a new era in the religious history of the province.

No Protestant missionary can be useful to any great extent in "Lower Canada" who is not able to converse and to preach in the French language; and Mr. Burns very soon felt the necessity of revising his attainments in that direction. So successful was he in this, that he not only addressed the "habitants" regularly in their own language, but, seemingly with the view of acquiring still greater facility in the use of it, he wrote a large proportion of his Canadian journal in the French language. As a specimen of his manner of dealing with his French auditors, and the admirable tact with which he met occasional cases of argument and appeal, we select the following letter addressed to friends in Scotland from a place at some distance from Montreal:—

"*Farnham, Lower Canada, April 21st*, 1845.—MY DEAR FRIENDS,—When I last wrote to Mr. Milne about a month ago, I was at the French Canadian Missionary House at St. Ré, twenty-three miles from where I now am. I returned to Montreal shortly after, and had the great pleasure of receiving on my arrival your welcome letter. I desire to thank you for your great kindness in ministering to my temporal wants, but much more, as you yourselves say, for seeking to bear me on your hearts at a throne of grace. My temporal wants are few, and Canada can easily supply them all; but my spiritual necessities are very great, and I dwell indeed in a dry and parched land, where no water is; yet I cannot deny that I find by experience that the God of Israel is everywhere present with his poor people, and that his presence is not excluded from the recesses of a Canadian forest. I could not but remark that your season for specially remembering

me was very nearly one when I needed very special support, and when I saw the Lord very clearly leading me in a path that I knew not. On the second day after I received your letter (28th March) I again left Montreal, with the view of visiting some desolate settlements of Protestants (chiefly Scotch and Irish) in the quarter where I still am, and also desiring to find some opening among the poor French Canadians, who are the principal inhabitants here and around. One of my fellow-travellers was a young Canadian student at the French college of St. Hyacinthe, with whom I had some conversation. He said if I were at their college they would soon convince me that I was in error. The opening was too favourable to be neglected, and I said that if I was in the neighbourhood I would certainly call upon him. In consequence of this the following Wednesday (April 2d) I set out for Yamaska, the seat of the college. The thaw here was so rapid at that time that the most of the bridges were swept away by the breaking up of the ice, which till then, as you may suppose, had formed so strong a covering, that the heaviest waggons could pass and repass upon the rivers. In consequence, I found that the stage could not proceed, and that I must either go on foot or return. I felt it my duty to go on; and though the distance was considerable (eighteen miles) in deep roads, I easily made it out, and reached the college on Thursday at seven o'clock. I must also mention a circumstance which happened by the way, which was remarkable when connected with what it led to. When I was about half-way I was a little fatigued, and was wishing to find some house where I might rest a little; but the houses were all French, and I saw no appearance of a public inn. However, the Lord directed me. Beside the road I saw a sheep which had got into a muddy ditch, and seemed to be unable to get out. I of course laid hold of it and pulled it out, thinking of the parable of Jesus. The people in the nearest house came out, and we got into conversation about the lost sheep in the gospel. I asked them

if there was any house where I could refresh myself; they invited me in with them. I told them on entering who I was; that if they wished it I might pass on, or if otherwise, that I might speak to them the more freely. They did not object to receive me as a Protestant and a Scotch minister of the gospel, and when we began to converse about the nature of my religion as compared with theirs, they were so engaged that it was difficult to get away from them, after remaining with them a full hour and a half. They asked me to remain during the night, as they said that with such roads I could not reach my destination. However, as I was obliged to return from Yamaska the following day (Friday) in order to fulfil another engagement, I resolved to go forward, and bade them adieu. I got easily forward, being supported by a strong sense of duty, and by the presence, I trust, of the great Master himself, and on arriving called for the young man I have alluded to. He seemed more careless than before, and was evidently afraid to show to any of those around him any mark of anxiety. He said, 'If you wish to see any of the priests I will let them know.' 'No,' I replied; 'I have no such desire on my own account, as I have no doubt that they are in deadly error, and that this book (the Bible) contains the truth of God. It is for your benefit that I am come, and if you have any desire to be instructed, you must ask them to converse on the subject *in your presence*. He hesitated at this, but said, 'If you be here to-morrow, you may call at twelve o'clock, when it will be more convenient than now.' I spent the night in a French inn, and the object of my visit becoming known, occasioned doubtless a good deal of conversation, and led in particular two strangers to ask me to converse with them on the subject. At the hour appointed I went to the college, and found the young man of the same mind as before. However, he said, 'I will go and see what the priests say.' He returned after some time to tell me that they absolutely refused to speak with me on these things unless I met them entirely alone.

Of course I had no wish for this, as it might have been turned to a bad purpose; and after warning a number of the young men of the awful danger of allowing themselves to be blindly led by those who feared the light, I came away, and set out on my journey. These young men told me they were not allowed to see the Bible, although not younger than seventeen. As I came along the street in front of the French church, thinking that I had seen the end of my visit, to my surprise I met the man in whose house I had been the previous day, and whom some business had brought to the village. On learning the result of my visit to the college, he said, 'Come, we will go to the curé (parish priest) and converse with him.' I told him I was willing, provided he understood that it was on his account that we went. He entered, and after a little returned and invited me in. I there met three priests and a number of their poor parishioners, and after explaining the circumstances which led to our meeting, we had a solemn and interesting interview for some time, during which I had an opportunity of stating some important truths which may yet be blessed, and of bringing before them the question of their own personal salvation. I have indeed cause to wonder at the strength given me on this occasion, and also, that though our intercourse was altogether in a foreign tongue, I felt scarcely more difficulty than in English. Since that time I have been preaching among the Protestants exclusively, although now and then I find an opportunity of meeting a few Canadians. Their spiritual sleep is indeed deep, and such as no power but that of God can break, even so far as to lead them to hear the truth. Their leaders cause them to err, and the poor people love to have it so. I have seen nothing very remarkable of a spiritual nature among our countrymen since I came to Canada, but our meetings are often very solemn, and during these past days I have seen as much appearance of impression as since I came to this land. It is my intention to return soon to Montreal for a time, and it may be

that when this reaches you I shall be attempting again to reach the multitude there in the open air, and that in both languages. You will then see what need we have of your prayers. My heart is often among you, and I do often plead for your salvation, and the advancement of Emmanuel's glory in you. I close these lines with the words I spoke on here yesterday evening: 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

"May these glorious ends be accomplished in you and me to his name's glory! Commending you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified, I am ever yours in the bonds of the gospel,—W. C. BURNS."

After a second visit of a few days to Quebec, where it will be remembered he first opened his commission as a herald of the cross on American ground, he was invited to visit Leeds and the Gaelic district of Inverness settlements, about fifty miles from the city. It was on this occasion he revived his knowledge of the Gaelic language, already somewhat familiar to him from his visits to the Highlands of Perthshire; and the raftsmen who were his fellow-voyagers on the St. Lawrence were valuable assistants to him in this work, while he imparted to them the rich treasures of evangelical truth. The settlers at Inverness heard from his lips the glorious gospel in the language most familiar to them, and the blessed results were deep and lasting. When Mr. Clark of Quebec and Dr. Burns

of Toronto visited the same place in 1863 they found a fresh revival of religion, specially marked by distinct memorials of the earlier labours of Mr. Burns. The visit of these gentlemen was in the midst of harvest; but the labourers, eager to hear, found two hours at mid-day, besides two hours in the evening, to wait on the preaching of the Word.

In regard to the attainments of Mr. Burns in the language of the settlers, we have been favoured with the following testimony of the Rev. Mr. M'Rae, of Knockbain, one of our ablest Gaelic scholars.[1] Mr. M. is speaking of a visit to Brodick, in the Isle of Arran, in 1847, when Mr. B. was his fellow-labourer:—"As I was always at hand to address the people in Gaelic, he made less use of that language than otherwise he might have done. But on one occasion he read a psalm in Gaelic, and commented upon it, when many of the people remarked that they understood him better than they did Mr. ——, a minister who had been recently preaching to them. On several occasions, when addressing the people in English, he introduced Gaelic words and phrases, and pointed out their expressiveness and beauty. For instance, speaking of the term '*adoption*,' he said, 'In your own beautiful language it is *uchd-mhachd, bosom-sonship:*' and again commenting on 2 Corinthians v. 20: 'I beseech you in Christ's stead,' he said, 'In your own language it is very striking, as *uchd Chriosd, out of Christ's bosom*,' as if the preacher were a voice from Christ's own heart inviting perishing sinners. Mr. B.'s knowledge of Gaelic was wonderful, considering

[1] Letter dated 12th December, 1868.

the short time he had devoted to the study of it." "He pronounced the Gaelic with astonishing accuracy, showing a mastery over the very shibboleths of the language." "The copy of the Gaelic Scriptures which he used he had received from a soldier in a Highland regiment, and he manifestly regarded it as a valuable memento."

The following notices from an intelligent correspondent afford some interesting glimpses of his labours elsewhere:

"At Williamstown, where the church was denied him by the minister and session, the innkeeper readily allowed Mr. Burns to preach under his roof, to a very respectable audience of attentive listeners. At Lochiel he stood in a waggon by the roadside and freely proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, one of his hearers, against his wishes, holding an umbrella over his head to protect him from the scorching rays of a Canadian sun.

"In the afternoon he preached in a barn, from Psalm xvii. 8, which sermon was blessed for the conversion of one individual, who is now one of the principal elders of the Free Church there.

"In Kenyon he preached in English, but many of the Gaelic people waited to hear him. A pious old woman, who understood no English, was asked why she remained. She replied, 'I thought it would be a privilege to be included in that dear minister's *prayers*. And another thing did me good: he seemed to dwell particularly on one word, spoken in such sweet tones, it sent a glow to my heart—the word 'salvation;' what does that mean?'

"During the communion services at Indian Lands, where his labours on a previous visit had been blessed to many,

he preached for several successive days to crowds of eager listeners, who with one accord declared they had never heard such glorious truths. In addressing the communicants, one of his persuasive remarks was, 'If you cannot come in by the saint's door, oh! come in by the sinner's!' A poor idiot who had been present remained after the congregation dispersed, and walked around the small tent (where Mr. Burns still lingered, engaged in prayer), several times, exclaiming, 'You touch my heart, you touch my heart.' Mr. B.'s attention was attracted to him; one of the people told him not to mind the man, he was a fool. 'Ay, ay, one of Christ's fools, perhaps,' which rebuked the man. Learning that there was a small colony of French Canadians several miles distant, he immediately decided upon visiting them, and having first addressed the English people of the place, in a grist-mill, he then preached to the French quite fluently in their own language. They listened as if spell-bound. He afterwards conversed with them individually in fluent French, and they united in saying, 'He was the best priest they ever heard speaking.'"

In moving from place to place on his evangelistic tours in the country districts, Mr. Burns did not often avail himself of the conveyances readily provided by friends, but if at all practicable would invariably travel on foot, so as to avail himself of the opportunities afforded in this way of speaking a word in season and out of season to groups of labourers working in the fields, or any one whom he happened to meet travelling on the highway. It is only those who have been in Canada that can know how

trying, and therefore how rare such foot travelling must be, owing to the extremes of heat and cold, and the rude state of the roads. When going on long journeys, and obliged to sail on the lakes, it was his constant practice to preach on board the steamers to all who might be disposed to hear him. On these occasions he more particularly addressed himself to the deck passengers, usually composed of emigrants and persons of the labouring and of the poorer classes. The calm and peaceful surface of the expanding lakes, and the even flow of the mighty rivers, greatly favoured such evangelistic efforts. The more intelligent and respectable managers on such conveyances encouraged these efforts by granting a free passage; and there cannot be a doubt that such unrequited and humble methods of doing good have been frequently owned by a blessing from on high. If Mr. Burns was known afterwards in China as "the man of the book," he was equally so known in Canada, as well as in his native land.

The following short sketch taken from his journal may give some idea of the variety and extent of his labours as a missionary in Canada West, while it embraces also places visited by him within the line of East or Lower Canada. "I have preached at St. Eustache, Lachute, St. Andrews, Hawkesbury, L'Original, and Vankleekhill, and yesterday evening I preached twice in French, but these meetings have not been large.—*Cornwall, Saturday, July 26th*, 1845. In the course of these last weeks I have preached often in English and in French, at Lochiel, Indian Lands, Kenyon, Roxbury, Finch, Martintown,

Williamstown, Lancaster, &c. I have had nine little French meetings since the last date. In general they were well disposed to listen to the word. Some of our English meetings have been very large and serious; but alas! the spiritual deadness of this country is very great. It became at last necessary for me to bear a distinct testimony to the principles of the Free Church. The report of the proceedings of the Assembly of that church are interesting. Their prosperity in an external point of view is very remarkable. May their spiritual prosperity be in proportion. There was formerly at Martintown near this, a true minister of Jesus Christ named Connel, who appears to have been the means of saving many souls. He died ten years ago, but his memory is blessed, as is that of all the just. After having preached at Cornwall, and further down on the shores of the St. Lawrence, I crossed the Salmon river to Dundee, quite near New York state, and from that place I preached as I went along towards Montreal, where I arrived last Thursday; having visited on my way Fort Covington, in New York state, La Rivière De Loup, Lake Strove, Huntingdon, St. Michael's, Durham, North Georgetown. Sometimes I have been a little encouraged, but in general spiritual religion, which alone saves the human soul, appears to be very rare. Nevertheless I have met with some people who seem to love the Lord. Yesterday I tried again to preach out of doors, but with little success. They stoned and pelted me with mud, but by the grace of God I escaped danger. One poor man in the crowd recognized me as the person whom he had seen beaten at Dublin near the custom-house. Al-

though a Romanist, he appeared yesterday much disposed to listen to the word, and his testimony in my favour will be undoubtedly useful among his countrymen." After a fortnight's labour at Bytown, now the city of Ottawa, where Mr. Wardrope, the excellent minister there, had been recently settled, he visited Bristol, Perth, Lanark, Dalhousie, Beckwith, Smith's Falls, Carleton Place, St. Andrews, Brockville, Prescott, and Kingston. At this last place he remained some weeks, and besides supplying the Free Church there, he preached seven times to the soldiers of the 71st Regiment whom he had formerly seen. The principal officer gave him liberty to do so, and this he devoutly notices as a proof of encouragement from God. He preached also in the country all around, particularly Gananoque, Glenburnie, and two other places; meeting everywhere with encouragement more or less. He visited also Cobourg, Belleville, and other places adjacent, such as Demorestville, Picton, and Napanee. When at Kingston he received through Dr. Begg, who had come out as a deputy from the Free Church, a letter inviting him to visit France. The impression on his mind by this circumstance is thus noted in his journal:—"Perhaps the Lord intends to call me thither, to bear testimony to his truth. May his will be done! Nevertheless, I must go to the upper part of this province; to London, for example, and its vicinity." He then adverts to his visits to, and missionary labours at, Fredericksburg, Peterborough, Ottonabee, Port Hope, Clarke, Newcastle, Toronto, Niagara, Streetsville, and Esquesing; "preaching," as he says, "everywhere the word of God which liveth and endureth

for ever." "At Toronto," he says, "I had much pleasure in meeting with the young men who are at college preparing for the work of the ministry. There are some among them who seem to be true Christians; and they are all making satisfactory progress in their studies." In the summer of 1846 he visited a considerable portion of the western territory, preaching at Oakville, Wellington Square, Hamilton, London, St. Thomas, Williams, Lobo, Southwold, Dunwich, Aldbro, Mora, Eckford, Chatham, Amherstburgh near the boundary line, Detroit in the United States, and Port Sarnia, meeting everywhere with encouragement. At Amherstburgh, he preached to a congregation of blacks, formerly slaves, who interested him much. At Sarnia he preached by means of an interpreter to an interesting assembly of American Indians, who are under the instructions of the Methodist missionaries; and, as might have been expected, the meeting and exercises were very solemn and edifying. Two months' labours were bestowed on Imperial, Woodstock, Beechville, Bradford, Lower Stratford, &c. In 1846 most of the places visited by Mr. Burns in Canada West were as yet unsupplied either with Free Churches or ministers; and his labours and varied ministrations were singularly blessed of God, as means of uniting and quickening the members. Among the ministers whom he found settled in those parts, we notice the names of Messrs. Wardrope, Graham, and Macalester, all of whom often spoke of the great refreshing and spiritual edification enjoyed by them and their people from his visits. Of the labours also of the Free Church deputies, particularly Dr. Bonar, Mr. Arnot,

Mr. Somerville, and Mr. Munro, he speaks with great interest. These were the ministers who had the charge of the "Free Church" congregation at Côte Street, Montreal, during his residence in Canada, and each of them appreciated the value of his labours, and readily took part with him in them.

Among the varied testimonies we have received to the good effects of the visit of Mr. Burns to Canada, one of the most valuable is that of the Rev. Alexander Cameron of Ardersier, whose opportunities of information were peculiarly favourable. "It was my lot," says he, "shortly after the return of Mr. Burns from Canada, to labour among the Highlanders of Glengarry for some years until health failed. I found the people in a very interesting state of mind,—many of them cherishing a tenderness of conscience and a brokenness of spirit, and thirsting eagerly for the Word of life. Some of all ages were in this condition, but especially young men and young women. The crowds that congregated on the Sabbaths at Lochiel, the most central station at which I preached, were sometimes very great. In the district of Glengarry, where there are now seven or eight ministers, there was then only one, Mr. Daniel Clark of Indian Lands, and myself; consequently the people came from all quarters, travelling five, ten, or even twenty miles and upwards. Many of them started on the Saturday so as to be forward in time for the morning service. The poor Roman Catholics observing all this, thought the heads of their Protestant neighbours were turned. In one sense it was easy to preach to these thirsty souls, for the word of God

was precious in those days. It was the same wherever I went; no matter where sermon was intimated to be preached in any school-room or district, the place would be crowded, even although such meetings were continued in different places nearly the whole week, as sometimes happened in winter; and often a few of the more ardent spirits would attend all these meetings, travelling from place to place for this purpose. The face of things began gradually but steadily to change. Old customs and inveterate habits were one by one abandoned. Balls and merry-makings and New Year's festivals, so frequent in that country, were fast disappearing. Some of the leaders in such things with their own hands cast their fiddles and bagpipes into the fire; and instead of the sounds of revelry the voice of praise and spiritual melody began to be heard in their dwellings. Zion was meanwhile putting on her beautiful garments. Communion seasons were now more like those in old Ferintosh than the former scanty gatherings in the 'backwoods.' This state of things I ascribe chiefly under God to the labours of Mr. Burns. Doubtless many other able and excellent men, especially some from the Free Church at home, laboured faithfully, and I believe successfully, in Glengarry; but the visit of Mr. Burns in my estimation was the crowning visit, and the impression produced by his preaching and his godly demeanour was deep, pervasive, and abiding. The great day alone shall fully declare it."

The following testimony in regard to the spirit of his mind when engaged in missionary labour in the district of Glengarry is well deserving of record. It is from the

communication of a Christian minister who had long laboured on the same spot, and although specially illustrative of Mr. Burns' character in connection with that locality, its leading features are more or less reflected from all the scenes of his labours. "He appeared to have continually in view an impression that he should do something for God, for his own soul, for the souls of others, and for eternity. His conversation was that of a man of extensive information, who knew how to apply it effectually to the best of purposes. His disposition was amiable, his feelings were tender; combined with a clear judgment, great firmness, caution and patience, qualities essential to dealing properly with unreasonable persons and with difficult questions. He did not consider that he had a warrant to proceed in any sacred duty without a consciousness of having the divine presence. I have sometimes seen him on this point in very great perplexity, earnestly wishing and praying for a special message direct from Heaven, and doubtful which was duty, to proceed or to keep silence: like Moses who prayed, 'If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence!'"

The following sketch under the hand of an intelligent office-bearer of our church in Glengarry, at whose house Mr. Burns sojourned, and by whom he was conducted on his missionary way, may illustrate the obstacles which stand in the way of itinerating labour in Canada, and the manner in which they were met and conquered by Mr. Burns. "A furious snow-storm having come on, he was detained for a week; and the state of the roads prevented any public meetings being held; but he improved

the time by conversing on matters pertaining to the kingdom with our household, including farm-servants, among whom were several French Canadians. We found him remarkably agreeable and sociable as a guest, entertaining us with incidents relative to his labours in Ireland, and those parts of Scotland where revivals have taken place. The recital of incidents connected with such themes always caused his countenance to beam with a heavenly joy. Much of his time also was spent in retirement and over his Bible, which he often carried to the table at meal times, referring to it whenever a pause in the conversation gave him an opportunity. Having an appointment to preach in the Congregational chapel, Indian Lands, so soon as the snow-storm subsided, he and I made a desperate effort to fulfil the engagement. Taking a powerful team of horses and a strong sleigh, we found the roads in an almost impassable state; the horses floundering in the snow, which in some places almost hid them from our view; and in other places they were incapable of moving forward one step, till I got out and made a track before them. In remarking on the state of the roads I happened to say, 'This is awful!' but was instantly checked by my dear fellow-traveller saying, 'Oh! my dear sir, there is nothing awful but the wrath of God.' Although travelling at the rate of only one mile an hour, we arrived at our destination in due time, where we found a goodly number assembled; and he delivered an impressive sermon, taking for illustration things that he had noticed along our route, such as the clearances in the forest, with the other usual symptoms of progress in the settlements."

References having been more than once made to the services of the deputies from the Free Church to Canada, it may not be unsuitable to insert the following notices from one of the friends who have contributed materials for this chapter:—"When I arrived in Montreal, in 1842, the spiritual condition of the three congregations was deplorably low, and, with very few exceptions, it was so throughout the country. But I make special reference to Montreal, where there were a very few—like the gleanings of the vintage—who were longing and waiting for the salvation of Zion. These few were led to unite in prayer to the exalted Head of the Church to hasten his coming by whom he would; and *he* was graciously pleased to hear their cry, and send his servants. The first was Dr. Burns of Paisley, whose first sermon was from Revelation i. 17, 18. To some this sermon was the fulfilment of the promise, 'When the poor and the needy seek water,' &c. I think Dr. Burns was followed by Mr. John Bonar (afterwards Dr. Bonar), full of love, and meekness, and wisdom, and undaunted courage. He was pre-eminently honoured of God in gathering and uniting the scattered sheep, and in organizing the Côte Street congregation, and, indeed, of advancing the interests of the church throughout the whole province. In his arrival was beautifully seen the majestic goings forth of Him who is wonderful in counsel. Mr. Bonar was succeeded by other eminent servants of God, whose special mission was to supply the Côte Street congregation, which was *then* the great centre of the Free Church in Canada." Among these may be specially noted Mr. Arnot, then of Glasgow, now of the Free High Church,

Edinburgh; Mr. Somerville of Anderston, Glasgow; Mr. Munro of Rutherglen; Mr. Macnaughton of Paisley, now of Belfast; Mr. Buchanan of Bothwell; Mr. Bremner of Glasgow; Professor King, now of Halifax, Nova Scotia; Mr. J. C. Burns of Kirkliston; Dr. Begg of Edinburgh; Mr. Paterson of Tranent; the late Mr. Miller of Dundee, and afterwards of Newcastle; Mr. Cobban of Braemar;—who, during periods more or less extended, laboured in the cities, and occasionally in the rural districts, to the edifying of multitudes of hearers, and to the effect of laying firm and deep the foundations of what in its character as a "united church" may now with perfect propriety be called the "Free Presbyterian Church of Canada."

Mr. Burns returned to Scotland after about two years of incessant labour in Canada in the same vessel in which he had before sailed for the West, arriving in Glasgow on the 15th September, 1846. He was still in vigorous health, yet showing but too evident traces of the exhausting and peculiarly trying scenes which he had passed through. The clear tones of a voice of more than ordinary compass and power were gone; his mind and spirit were worn and jaded; and he had already begun to acquire a certain *aged* look which he never afterwards wholly lost. He had indeed emphatically "endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and he bore the marks of it more or less to his grave.

CHAPTER XI.

1846—1847.

CALL TO THE CHINESE FIELD.

MY readers will remember a statement from my brother's own hand of the circumstances of his first consecration to the missionary work, and of the remarkable train of events by which the fulfilment of his purpose was temporarily, though, as it seemed, indefinitely, delayed. That purpose still remained unchanged. He was still as much as ever, and all through those laborious and eventful intervening years, a missionary at heart, and only waited the intimation of the Master's will as to the time and the place of his appointed work. He had heard the general summons of the divine Commander, "Who will go for me?" and he had resolutely answered, "Here am I, send me." That answer had been recorded in heaven, and lived evermore within his heart. Amid all his home labours he spoke and acted under the solemn sense of it —spoke and acted as a missionary just about to go forth to a distant land, and only addressing a few parting words to his brethren at home ere the final summons to depart should reach him. How that summons came at last, and in what spirit it was obeyed, will be best told in his own words, in the continuation of the same statement just

referred to, dated at sea, "Thursday, July 29th, 1847, lat. 25° 30′ south; lon. 28° 40′ west.—. . . From this time (July 23d, 1839) until the Disruption I appeared to have a special work to do in my own country, and having no call to the missionary field I thought no further of it than this, that I did not feel it would be lawful for me to *settle* at home, but only to comply with present calls of duty to preach the Word. In the year 1843, and still more in 1844, I found my heart very much drawn off from the home field—the days of God's great power with me seeming to be in a great measure past, and ecclesiastical questions having taken so deep a hold on the public mind, that it was not in a state as before to be dealt with simply about the question of conversion. In these circumstances I went at the call of some friends to Dublin in 1844 to try the field there, but finding no great opening I returned to Scotland, and the way being made very clearly open for my going on a visit to Canada, I sailed for Montreal, August 10. In Canada I found sufficient evidence that it was indeed the call of God which I obeyed in going to it; but after labouring there for nearly two years, and having gone over the ground which seemed providentially laid out for me, I felt that unless I were to remain there for life, the time was come for my departure. I was confirmed in this view by having had my mind afresh directed towards India by a letter from an acquaintance there, and also by a call from our continental committee to make use of my newly acquired knowledge of French by visiting the continent of Europe. I accordingly sailed from Quebec for Scotland on August 20th, 1846, having

a deep impression that I should find no special work to do in Scotland that would detain me there longer than a few months, but feeling quite uncertain what would be my ultimate destination. On my arrival I was asked anew to go to the Continent, but against this there were objections. I did not see any prospect of doing much there during a brief visit, and I could not but reflect that at my period of life it must be now decided whether I was to preach from place to place to the end or go to a heathen field, as originally destined. At any rate I felt that I could decide on nothing until I had paid a few visits to those home fields with which I had formerly been connected. This work occupied me during the autumn and the early part of the winter. I might have protracted the period indefinitely, being encompassed with invitations on every hand; but as I did not see or feel any special blessing in this work, I preached no more than I could not avoid doing, and then came the question, What is my duty with reference to the future? About the end of the year, at the time of the Parsee's ordination in Edinburgh, I arrived at the clear decision that I was not at liberty to labour any longer as hitherto without ascertaining whether our missionary committee would still desire me to fulfil my original intention. I accordingly called on Dr. Candlish, and having laid before him my views, and joined with him in imploring divine guidance, he stated that he thought it was clearly my duty to go as originally destined to the heathen, provided that I found no special cause as heretofore to detain me, and said that he would confer with others on the subject. He did so,

but found that though no one would object to my going if I wished to do so, yet as the Indian stations were all occupied, there was no special opening for me. At this very time, and while they were actually conversing on the matter, a letter came to the convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, Dr. James Buchanan, from James Hamilton of Regent Square, London (convener of the English Presbyterian Church Missionary Committee), making earnest inquiry whether Dr. B. could point out any minister or preacher in Scotland who might be suitable to go as their first missionary to China, seeing they had contemplated this mission for more than two years, but had as yet been disappointed in finding suitable agents. This seemed to Dr. B. a providential coincidence, and without communicating with me, he wrote mentioning a few names and mine among the rest. Some weeks elapsed without my hearing anything further on the subject; but meanwhile my own experience more and more pointed my thoughts and desires to the foreign field, and at last in the beginning of February a letter came to me from Mr. Hamilton, in which, after reminding me of my original design and prospects regarding an eastern mission, he mentioned the position of their own missionary scheme, and asked what my views in regard to embarking in such an undertaking now were. As he wished a speedy answer I could only reply that the matter was too varied in its bearings and of too momentous a character to be at once decided on; but that it would be the subject of prayer and consideration, as well as of conference with the servants of God around me. On receipt of my letter, their

missionary committee instructed Mr. Hamilton to send me an express and earnest call to become their church's first missionary to China. I received this, but still found myself unable to arrive at a final decision. Regarding the importance of the work there could be no doubt; but when I considered on the one hand the manner in which God had hitherto called me to labour, and the many calls at home and abroad which I still had to preach the word as heretofore; and on the other considered the uncertainty of my being suited to the peculiarities of the Chinese field, I felt embarrassed, and though I wrote a letter of acceptance, I could not send it off, but rather suspended the case by letting them know my difficulties, and my need of delay, with a view of getting further light. I also urged them in the interval to look out for others, and mentioned two ministers to whom they might apply. Another ten days elapsed, during which I was in Edinburgh, as I had been for some time previously, preaching in St. Luke's, &c., and now also assisting Dr. Duncan in his junior Hebrew class, his health being imperfect. The call to China was gradually assuming more and more importance in my view, and though some of God's servants seemed to doubt whether it was a field suitable to my habits, &c., yet the prevailing opinion seemed to be that I ought to go. Feeling that I must resume communication with the English committee, I went out before doing so to Kilsyth, at the communion season on the first Sabbath of March, that I might sit, it might be, for the last time at the table of the Lord Jesus on earth with my beloved parents, and that I might have the aid of their counsel, and that of my

cousins David and Charles J. Brown (of Glasgow and Edinburgh), who were expected to be my father's assistants. On the Monday after the communion I wrote to London again to let it be known that I was still weighing the matter brought before me, and that with a view to arrive at a final and satisfactory decision, I would be glad to be furnished with information in regard to the nature of the work in which they would wish or expect me to be engaged, and also to learn what length of time it would require to attain an adequate knowledge of the language with a view to preach the gospel in it. I also stated generally on the subject, 1st. That I did not make such inquiries as if difficulties would be sufficient to keep me back, were the path of duty in other respects plain; but simply in order that I might have full materials for comparing this call with others that were given me, as from France, &c. 2d. That as devoted to the missionary work I felt that unless it appeared that God detained me at home by some special call, I must go to *some* field where Christ had not been named, &c. In reply to this letter Mr. Hamilton wrote that he believed the difficulties of the Chinese language had been overestimated, but that they expected about the end of March from China Mr. Hugh Matheson, one of their committee, who would bring them full and recent information, and that this would be communicated to me. At this time I spent four weeks preaching in Bute and Arran, and on the 10th of April I went to Edinburgh to preach in Mr. Moody Stuart's. The impression of my duty now became so strong that I felt I could no longer hesitate about signifying my willing-

ness to go, and on Monday I wrote to that effect. I saw that I would dishonour my profession of the gospel, and thus wound the honour of Jesus, if I seemed to linger any longer; and though I had not heard again from London, I felt that on general grounds, and taking even the most discouraging view of the case, it was my duty to go forward. The committee met on this very day, and so discouraging was the view given by Mr. M. of the field and of the missions there, as compared with our missions in India, that the committee resolved to recommend to the Synod about to meet at Sunderland the following Tuesday to give up thoughts of a mission to China, and begin in place a mission in Hindustan. When I heard of this decision, which the receipt of my letter did not seem to have altered, I was at a loss how to act, but saw that now matters were coming to a crisis, and that the issue would be either to shut up my path toward China or set me free from their call altogether. I did not feel any sympathy with their proposal to draw back, and fearing lest they might do so, and thus dishonour the command and promise of the exalted Jesus, I was the more pressed in spirit to go forward, that such a consequence might be avoided. I accordingly resolved to go up to Sunderland on the 20th, and meet the Synod on the matter. I did so, and on Wednesday the 21st I found that the Synod were bent on prosecuting the mission, and so on Thursday I was ordained to the work. . . . In this manner from step to step my path has been hedged up in this important matter; and now I find myself in the midst of the great ocean studying Chinese, and having the prospect,

if the Lord will, of spending the rest of my days in that vast empire of heathen darkness. 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and to them that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.'"

One or two sentences from the ordinary entries in his journal will complete the history of this interesting juncture, and throw some additional light on the circumstances of the call which now came to him, and of the posture of his soul towards it:—

"The call to this work came to me some months before I had full light to comply with it; but the way at last was made in all respects very plain. . . . On Tuesday, April 9th, I met in Glasgow James Denniston, returned from Jamaica, and on his way, if God will, to Constantinople as a missionary to the Jews. Thus, after so long an interval, we met again in the place where nine years before, at the University, he had given himself to the Lord to go to the circumcision, and I to go to the Gentiles. Having been so long engaged in other work, we had now the near prospect of entering on the fields in regard to which the vows of God were upon us. It was a confirming interview. To sovereign grace be the praise—the endless, unutterable praise! . . . I came up to Sunderland to confer upon the matter," and "found to my joy that the mind of the Synod was to go *forward;* and I being now ready, and my way hedged in, I was next day ordained according to Acts xiii., and the day following I was in London. The Presbytery of Newcastle ordained me—the only one within whose bounds I had previously laboured; Dr. Paterson presided (in his own church we were met), being the only minister remaining in his place of those with whom I had laboured in 1841, &c.; William Chalmers[1] preached at the ordination,

[1] Now the Rev. Professor Chalmers, D.D., of the English Presbyterian College, London.

being not only my cousin, but a minister born at Malacca, the centre of the early Chinese mission under Dr. Milne, &c. These were interesting coincidences; and still more so was the fact that Dr. Morrison, the first evangelical Chinese missionary, whose Chinese Bible I am now studying, was the son of an elder in the English Presbyterian Church, and was brought up as a Christian in the High Bridge Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, where, in 1841, I laboured for three months, little thinking of such a position as that which I now occupy."

My readers will willingly linger a little longer in the retrospect of this memorable ordination solemnity, which formed so important an era in the history of missions to the far East; and with this view will read with interest the following lines written at the time by an eye-witness, himself a devoted friend of the Chinese cause, and a deep sharer in all the hopes and fears and prayerful aspirations of that solemn time:—

"By far the most solemn and striking matter at the meeting of Synod has been the setting apart of William C. Burns as a missionary to China. Who could have believed that such would have taken place only two days before? Such an ordination has scarcely ever—if ever—taken place. It is perfectly marvellous. The thing was done suddenly (2 Chronicles xxix. 36), yet I cannot think hastily, for God hath evidently been preparing his servant for it these months past. The more I reflect upon all the circumstances since the time of our first speaking to him on the 21st December, when we told him of the strait in which the Church was for want of missionaries to China, up to the decision of the Synod on the 21st April to ordain him the very next day, the more I am amazed at the wondrous things which have come to pass, and cannot doubt that God has been in them of a truth.

"On the 21st December, 1846, Mr. Burns was much at a loss

as to the future; but seeing no open door, and no special call to labour at home, he placed himself in the hands of the Foreign Mission Committee to go to India, his original destination. The committee were obliged, from the state of their funds, to refuse his services. Shortly afterwards Mr. James Hamilton wrote to him, asking if he would go in the service of the English Presbyterian Church in the mission proposed to China. This was made the subject of much thought and prayer, and it was long before he could at all discover the path which the Lord was indicating in the matter. Dr. Duncan strongly urged him to go; others as decidedly dissuaded him, and endeavoured to show to him that Scotland had still claims upon him. He himself inclined to go for a time to the Continent, and it was long before he could see that he had any call from the English Presbyterian Church, or that China was the field to which he should devote himself. On the 10th April he was still in darkness; on the 11th he preached in Edinburgh (St. Luke's), from Jeremiah xv. 16, and John xii. 36, 'Walk while ye have the light.' Light dawned upon him that day; his heart was enlarged towards the heathen; his prayers were full of pleadings on their behalf. Next morning he came to breakfast, and to our utter amazement told us he no longer saw his way to refuse the call, and intended to write to London to that effect that day. A note received the following morning mentioned that he had done so. His desire was to have a conference at the meeting of Synod the following week at Sunderland, when future plans might be decided upon.

"The very day he wrote his note, placing himself at the disposal of the church for China, the Foreign Mission Committee had a meeting, when it was decided to abandon China—to undertake Central India instead. The information which the Committee had received regarding the number of missionaries already in the field, the difficulty of acquiring the language, and the country being still so generally closed, led to that conclusion. Mr. Burns was informed of that decision. An

elaborate report was drawn up in his best style by Mr. Hamilton to lay before the Synod.

"Tuesday morning the 20th April, at nine o'clock the committee met in Sunderland. After much consultation the brethren came to one mind, that we must not abandon China—the Church was committed to it—and Mr. Hamilton was instructed to draw up an entirely different report. No communication had been received from Mr. Burns; but the Church resolved that its duty was to keep by China, and to prosecute the missionary work there, as had been resolved upon two years before. Mr. Burns arrived in Sunderland the next day. His mind was unchanged. China was still his field, whether the Presbyterian Church abandoned it or no; and he was not a little amazed when he heard of the proceedings in committee the preceding day.

"The new report was read in Synod; Mr. Hamilton spoke and others followed. Mr. Welsh was asked to pray for guidance in the matter, and Mr. Burns was then invited to address the brethren. He did so; giving an account of his early life—his dedication to the missionary work—his arrest in Scotland, when the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace, and the reasons for the resolution now formed. The people were much affected, as was the speaker; he was obliged frequently to pause, and at last to stop altogether. A meeting for conference was shortly afterwards summoned, at which he fully opened up his wishes in the matter, especially as regarded ordination. He wished to go forth only as an evangelist, not to administer sacraments; 'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.' Acts xiii. was read; Mr. P. L. Miller prayed; and after much discussion it was resolved that he should be ordained the next day at ten o'clock, and proceed to China forthwith.

"The ordination services took place in a church in which he had often preached, and by a Presbytery (the only one in England) within whose bounds he had laboured for several months with no small success—a Presbytery from which

Morrison also went forth, for his father was an elder of High Bridge Church, Newcastle; and not the least remarkable coincidence was the fact that the minister who preached had been born and baptized in China. The service was commenced by the moderator, Mr. Anderson, giving out Psalm lxxii. 8–11. He read Acts xiii., and sung Paraphrase xxiii. 11–15:

'Lo! former scenes, predicted once
Conspicuous rise to view;
And future scenes, predicted now,
Shall be accomplish'd too.
Sing to the Lord in joyful strains!
Let earth his praise resound,
Ye who upon the ocean dwell,
And fill the isles around!

'O city of the Lord! begin
The universal song;
And let the scatter'd villages
The cheerful notes prolong.
Let Kedar's wilderness afar
Lift up its lonely voice;
And let the tenants of the rock
With accents rude rejoice;

'Till 'midst the streams of distant lands
The islands sound his praise;
And all combin'd, with one accord,
JEHOVAH'S glories raise.'

The prayers were remarkable for enlargement and fervency—bearing upon every point connected with the solemn work of the day. Mr. Chalmers took as his text John xix. 30, 'It is finished;' and viewed the words, 1st. In reference to God; 2d. to man—closing with an application to the occasion—what was left for Christ's disciples to do. The ordination service was conducted by Dr. Paterson with extreme simplicity and apostolic fervour. After the questions had been satisfactorily answered, Mr. Burns knelt down—Dr. Paterson prayed, and laid hands on him—as did the other ministers, and so the

first missionary of the English Presbyterian Church was 'set apart by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.' The charge followed, which was suited to the occasion, and suited to the man to whom it was addressed. Dr. Paterson said, 'This is a very solemn occasion to us, and it is also a very solemn occasion to you, dear brother. You yesterday told us how the Lord had directed your heart to offer yourself for this work, and to respond to the call of the Church to go forth unto the Gentiles. You told us that you did not require to return to your home, but were ready to set out with your little scrip on the morrow. And now, I would address to you the words of the Lord to Saul, 'Rise, brother, stand upon thy feet,' &c., Acts xxvi. 16–18. You have seen what few of us have; you have seen in the past the Spirit of God going forth in his wondrous power, giving testimony to the word of his grace, and the spirits of men bowing before him as mighty trees shaken by the wind. You have seen whole multitudes awed by his presence, and constrained to acknowledge that the Lord was revealing himself of a truth. Have you not seen these things? Can you not testify to them? The Lord hath now called thee for this purpose, that you may go forth 'a minister and witness of those things which thou hast seen.' While yet a stripling, he chose you for a great work, by which he designed to prepare a people for a great event, and to bring many forth to testify for the Lord Jesus Christ as the great and *only Head of the Church.* But he also sends you forth to testify of those things in the which he will appear unto thee—in which he will YET appear unto thee, 'delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now he sends thee.' Yes, brother, he has been preparing you for another work, and he will go before you to open up the way and guide you in all your steps.' Verse 18 was then commented on by Dr. P. Dr. P. continued: 'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables' (2 Timothy iv. 1–4). Yes, soon, very, *very soon* the time will come when they will not endure *sound* doctrine; for they have *naturally* itching ears, and turn away from the truth. 'But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make *full proof* of thy ministry.'

"'If nature be shrinking within you, if you feel yourself very weak in the contemplation of this great work to which you have been set apart, let me direct you to another passage (Matthew xxviii. 18–20), 'ALL power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye THEREFORE.' Yes, he has all power and all authority, and must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 'The earth is *the Lord's*, and the fulness thereof.' He is King of nations as well as King of his Church; he has power to protect and uphold, and he will deliver you from the nations unto whom now he sends you. Ah! look to him—to him alone. You may see the stars shining around you, you may think of many a bright light who has gone before into the dark places of the earth; but let me counsel you to turn from these, and look to Jesus. He is now on the throne, he will shield you, he will watch over you, he will send down an abundant unction on your soul, he will supply all your need. Go forth then in his strength. Remember that God hath given the heathen to his Son for an inheritance; remember that Jesus hath promised to be with you alway even unto the end of the world. Go forth even as a little child, led by Him who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and who holdeth the stars in his right hand. May thy dwelling henceforth be in the secret place of the Most High, and thy lodging under the shadow of the Almighty!'

"This brief sketch gives only an idea of the style of the address, which was listened to with great attention and under

deep emotion by many of the congregation in the crowded church. Psalm xcviii. 1–4 was then sung:

'O sing a new song to the Lord,
For wonders he hath done:
His right hand and his holy arm
Him victory hath won.
The Lord God his salvation
Hath caused to be known;
His justice in the heathen's sight
He openly hath shown.

'He mindful of his grace and truth
To Israel's house hath been;
And the salvation of our God
All ends of th' earth have seen.
Let all the earth unto the Lord
Send forth a joyful noise;
Lift up your voice aloud to him,
Sing praises, and rejoice.'

"After the service, Mr. Miller, formerly of Dundee, and Mr. Irving of Falkirk accompanied him to Dr. Paterson's house, and were afterwards joined by Mr. Nisbet, &c., where prayer was made, and at four o'clock Mr. B. left for Newcastle, and preached that evening in Groat Market Chapel. I joined him there at ten o'clock. A considerable number were waiting to bid him farewell. We went to the lodging, sung Psalm c., 'ALL people,' &c., read Mark xvi., upon verse 3 of which he remarked how the women still went on, not knowing how the stone would be rolled away, and applied it to our duty in similar circumstances. We spoke of how marvellously the difficulties had been removed already in this matter. He was filled with astonishment at the way in which it had been gone about—so little of man in the whole matter—so little preparation in the sight of the world—and the Church so harmonious. We prayed together and then parted. The next morning at five o'clock, I heard his heavy foot pass my door in time for the train to London, on his way to China as the first missionary of the Presbyterian Church in England."

It will have been observed that my brother in finally accepting the call of the Synod declared himself willing, without returning even for a parting visit to Scotland, to proceed at once to his distant sphere of labour. It is said that when publicly asked in presence of the court how soon he could be ready to enter on his work, he replied with prompt decision, "To-morrow." This resolute tone and attitude of spirit was eminently characteristic of him. As a man that warreth, he entangled not himself with the affairs of this life, and moved about ever as a free and unencumbered soldier, ready at a moment's warning to march at the Master's command to any quarter of the world. Amongst the memories of his old classic studies the *miles expeditus*[1] was ever, as I remember, a favourite name and idea with him, and to that model did he ever strive to discipline and brace his spirit. Long as he had doubted, and patiently as he had sought and waited for light as to the will of God in this matter, now that that will to him was clear he was utterly without hesitation and without fear. Even the difficulties which stood in the way, and which at that very time had been so greatly magnified as almost to have postponed for the time the attempt to enter a field so unpromising, instead of daunting, only fired his spirit, and made him more impatient to press on, like a brave soldier rushing to the breach in a forlorn hope. "This," writes he in his journal, "only strengthened my resolution to go forward, *fearing lest the name of that Lord to whom all power is given in heaven*

[1] *i.e.* Without baggage or heavy armour, and so always ready for march or battle.

and on earth might be dishonoured; and I came to Sunderland to confer about the matter, when I found to my joy that the mind of the Synod was to go *forward.*" Now then that the matter was decided, his voice was for immediate action. The day before he had, I believe, left his father's house with the fixed resolution that so it should be. He did not *say* farewell to those that were at home in the house, but he none the less and solemnly *took* farewell. "I was," says an elder sister, "the only person at home when he left, our parents being both, I think, in the north. I remember Dr. Hamilton's letter earnestly asking him to be the pioneer missionary for whom the English Presbyterian Church had been so long seeking. This letter was followed by one from Mrs. Barbour, in which she reminded him that in an address to the Students' Missionary Association in Edinburgh, he had said to this effect, that when young men gave themselves to the Lord for the work of the ministry, they were not to prescribe to him where their field of labour should be, but should be willing to go anywhere, '*even to China.*' I remember he smiled on reading this, and said he did not remember having said *even to China*, but went immediately and looked at the address, and said, 'Yes it is—even to China.' Before receiving this call he was studying the Gaelic, and seldom had the Gaelic psalm-book out of his hand, but soon after this we saw that the Gaelic was laid aside and the Encyclopedia was brought out, and he was busy studying the Chinese characters. I don't think he gave a decided answer to James Hamilton before the meeting of the Synod at Newcastle; but having heard that

some timid persons were daunted by some difficulties that stood in the way, he said, 'That's the very thing that makes my call clear to go,' and at once packed his little carpet-bag to start for Newcastle. The day he went off he was long in papa's study in prayer, and then coming out he silently wrung my hand and looked solemnly round as if taking a farewell look of the house; he had his Breadalbane plaid over his arm, and after reaching the front-door he turned and hung it up in the lobby, taking one belonging to his *mother* instead, and giving me an expressive look as he did so. I was very much overcome, and watched his receding figure with the feeling that he would not return. I went into the study to give vent to my feelings, and found the Bible left open at Isaiah lxiv., 'Oh, that thou would rend the heavens,' &c. On going up to the drawing-room I found the Gaelic Testament and psalm-book neatly put into one of the shelves, as if he had done with them, and I then said, 'William will return no more.' In a very few days, as you know, it was all decided, and the first announcement we received was from Mr. Irving of Falkirk, who kindly came straight from the Synod meeting to give us the tidings." So he writes in his journal, the thread of which I now gladly resume:—"I had fully, though not formally, taken leave of all friends in Scotland before coming up to the Synod, and therefore thought it duty to act upon the text, 'Let me first go and bid them farewell,' &c., and without returning back to hasten on my way. This view approved itself to others, and I hoped to have gone off at once through France, and to have been in China in July by the

steam communication lately established. This was overruled, however, on the ground that I would reach the field at a trying season, and by a trying route; and so it was resolved that I should wait for this present vessel, and in the interval visit the churches in this Synod. I have been accordingly in most of them—Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Brighton, London, &c. &c., and see much cause to adore the wisdom and grace of God in this delay. I do not hope again to see my dear parents before setting out; but my brother Islay and his wife from Dundee have come up to see me away, and were with me to-day along with two others occupied in my outfit (Mr. and Mrs. Ballantyne), when we took possession of my little cabin and of the ship for the Lord in the exercise of his worship. . . . My beloved parents still spared to us seem to rejoice in giving me up to the Lord for this 'honourable' work. Yes, 'it is an honourable work,' as Dr. M'Donald of Ferintosh said to me in his own veteran spirit, when the Lord permitted me to meet with him once more in Glasgow at the late communion there. . . . Before leaving Scotland I preached in Bute, Arran, &c., and had *many* calls to other places; but as no very special blessing seemed to attend the word, I did not feel myself at liberty to refuse a call to labour among the heathen, and that call came to me as one originally self-devoted to that work should the Lord call me. It is thus in one view a dark and solemn dispensation in my case to leave this land. I go away because, either through my sin or the people's, God's Spirit worketh not among us as in years past. But it may be that this is God's own way of shutting

me out from the home field, and sending me far hence to other Gentiles. 'They essayed to preach the gospel, &c., but the Spirit suffered them not,' and then the vision of the man of Macedonia appeared, and they 'went over to help them.' Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord? A man's goings are of the Lord: how then *can* a man understand his own way? THOU wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Hosanna! Amen."

In such a strain of exalted faith and hope, and with such solemn musings alike of the past and of the future, he closed the eventful period of his home and colonial ministry, and turned his face toward those new scenes to which his divine Master was pointing the way.

CHAPTER XII.

1847.

DEPARTURE FOR CHINA.

THE missionary's departure from England, though delayed in the manner above described, took place at last somewhat suddenly. The ship in which he was to sail, the *Mary Bannatyne*, was dropping slowly down the Channel under a light breeze towards Portsmouth, and it was expected that several days would elapse before we should have to join her there. He had accordingly made several preaching engagements for the intervening days, and was, on the evening of Tuesday, the 8th June, in the very act of entering the Scotch Church at Woolwich in fulfilment of one of these, when an express from London reached him, conveying the information that a favourable wind had sprung up and carried the ship by a rapid run to Portsmouth, and that not an hour was to be lost if he wished to join her before she sailed. He accordingly hastened at once to the railway station in hopes to catch the last train, but was, happily as it turned out, too late. Next morning he and I set out together, not without some fears of after all missing the passage, but arrived to our joy in good time. On reaching the harbour we saw the ship riding at anchor in the roads,

and procuring a boat reached it in half an hour. Finding that the vessel would not after all sail till the evening, I resolved to remain on board, and return by the latest boat. We retired to the little cabin and spent the time in reading the sacred Word, and in pouring out our hearts in prayer, for the last time it might be in this world together. He read the 17th chapter of St. John, and the last of 2 Timothy from the 10th verse to the end, accompanying the slow and interrupted reading with many gracious and quickening words out of the fulness of the heart. The latter passage especially he bade me mark and remember, and convey it to his friends and brethren at home as a parting message of love. Coming to the last words he paused for a moment and said: "The last words are, 'Salute Prisca,' &c.; this *you* must do for me: for I could not write," and burst into a flood of tears. We wept together. In the course of the afternoon he had shut himself up for an hour or two for the purpose of writing, and I saw afterwards on the table a sheet of paper half-written addressed to his mother; but the effort had been too much for him, and he had given it over. After again joining in prayer we embraced and parted, he again and again exclaiming as he lay upon my neck, "O! is it not blessed; is it not wondrous grace to be separated in this way, separated for such a cause and for such a work?" His last words were, "Remember our father and mother." As we pushed off from the vessel's side, he called after me and pointed to his Bible, which he held up in his hand, as if to say that there was the only thing worth living for in all the world, and the one ever-

lasting bond of union for those who are parted here. A fresh breeze sprung up; the light cutter flew before the wind, and in a few moments we had left the vessel far behind us; but long as I watched its lessening form in the deepening darkness I seemed to see him standing in the same attitude still. I felt that I had parted not from a brother only, but from one far above me, a true and eminent saint of God. Just as we were nearing the shore they had drawn up their anchor and spread their sails to the winds.

Three hours afterwards he was again in his cabin, resuming with more calm and collected thoughts the interrupted letter to his mother:—

"*On board the 'Mary Bannatyne,' off Portsmouth, June 9th*, 1847, 11.30 P.M.—MY DEAR MOTHER,—My embarkation has been at the last, as I. will tell in detail, rather sudden and hurried. I expected not to leave London until to-morrow morning, but the ship got quickly round to Portsmouth, and last night when entering the door of Mr. Thomson's church at Woolwich to preach, a messenger from London met me to say that I must get to Portsmouth without losing an hour lest the ship should be gone. I endeavoured accordingly to leave London by the last train, but was too late, and happily so, for in case I had got away I would not have seen I.; but as it was graciously arranged, I came away at seven A.M., and had J., I., and Mrs. I. to the station, and I. all the way. He was on board during most of the day, and left us in the evening. My heart was too full to put pen to paper at that time, and I left as I thought all news for him to give;

but since he went away I find that by our pilot I may still send a few lines, which I cannot omit the duty of attempting. I have now entered on a new sphere of duty and trial, I mean on board ship. Much fidelity and wisdom are needed to be a witness for the Lord in such circumstances, and I have in this matter as well as with reference to ulterior designs much need of fervent believing prayer. Do not forget us. May all that sail with us be given to Jesus. We have already begun worship in the cuddy, and I hope it may be continued throughout, if possible, morning and evening. I felt it a great privilege to have I. with me at the last. May this separation for the gospel be to each of us a blessing. Ah! what grace is manifested in *such* a separation! Why am I not, as many, going forth in search of mammon; or put to sea, as some are, because they are unprofitable even in man's account on land? Who maketh thee to differ? O! to live under the full influence of Christ's constraining love! To us to live will thus be Christ, and to us to die will be gain. We know not the progress nor the end of this voyage, nor what news may reach us from Britain should we reach our destination. Yet I rejoice to go. I feel that I am where it is the Lord's gracious will that I should be, and I would join with all his people in praying, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' All the ends of the earth shall yet remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the people shall do homage unto him; for the kingdom is the LORD'S, and he is the Governor among the nations. On his vesture and on his thigh there is a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords!

Now may the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us! Salute all the brethren for us. Thus in haste again writes, dearest mother, your affectionate son,—WM. C. BURNS."

Such was his farewell, full alike of solemn tenderness, and of brave, resolute hopefulness, to his native land, and to the home of his birth and early years. The progress of his voyage, and his unwearied labours for Christ in the narrow sphere now meanwhile assigned to him, will be best followed in the words of his own journal, which again becomes more or less continuous:—

"*At Sea, Wednesday, June 23d*, 1847.—It is now a fortnight since I embarked in this vessel; and thus far God hath graciously prospered our way. For a week after we set sail we were detained by contrary and, in general, stormy winds at the mouth of the British Channel, but since that time the weather has been delightful, and we have been wafted speedily on our way, so that to-morrow morning, if the wind continue favourable, we shall pass by Madeira. During the first few days I was rather sick, but I have been able from the beginning to do a little at my Chinese studies, and during the last few days my progress has been, I think, encouraging. We have had public worship every evening in the public cabin, and to-day I succeeded in getting it begun also in the morning. . . .

"*At Sea, lat.* 23° *south, long.* 29° *west, Wednesday, July 28th.*—It is seven weeks this day since I came on board this vessel. Hitherto we have been all mercifully preserved, and have advanced steadily, though not very rapidly, on our voyage. Some of the crew have had illness, but they are

again able for their duties. I have suffered a good deal, and still suffer almost daily, from nausea, which abridges my ability for close application to study. I am, however, able to do a little from day to day in acquiring the Chinese, and occasionally I make more rapid advances. The work is pleasant and profitable from the Bible being my text-book, and in consideration of the momentous end which I have in view. Morrison was enabled to accomplish a great work in preparing such a version of the New Testament as that which it is my privilege to study. I have felt much interested by his *Memoirs*, which I am again reading. He was a *spiritual* man as well as a man of strong natural parts, and was thus both naturally and by grace qualified for the work of translation. . . .

"I have been graciously permitted hitherto to maintain family worship in the cabin every evening, and generally also in the morning, although with occasional difficulty, the desire not being as yet very great. The illness of one of the seamen opened my way a good deal in the forecastle, and I now have worship there also at least twice a week. On Sabbaths all join with us excepting one or two. When shall the cry be heard among us: 'What shall I do to be saved?' Yesterday afternoon we passed Trinidad, a very picturesque island, uninhabited except by a few goats and swine. It stands quite alone in the midst of this vast ocean. Should our voyage be favourable, we shall not again see land until near the Chinese seas. The Island of St. Paul's comes first in sight. I was glad to find on crossing the line that the heathenish practices which used to be common on shipboard, and of which Dr. Morrison gives an account in his journal forty years ago, had no place among us. All went on as usual, with only some passing allusions to the subject. Such changes among our seamen are hopeful.

'Do thou thy glory far advance
Above both sea and land,' Psalm xxxvii.

"*Lat.* 33° *south, lon.* 14° *west. Thursday, August 5th.*—This

morning at half-past four o'clock, Thomas M'Leod, an apprentice in the ship, fell overboard and was drowned. They tried to render him assistance, but all was vain, as it was dark and rainy, and the wind was changing at the time. He was aged about seventeen, a native of Rothesay, and the son of a widow. The evening before last I had worship in the steerage or half-deck with him and some of the other men, and was led to speak specially of the danger of sudden death to which they were exposed. He seemed attentive, and answered me the question in the Shorter Catechism, 'What is Prayer?' I had also conversed and prayed with him previously when sick. This is all I can say of his case. He is, alas! now numbered with those whom 'the sea will give up' at the last day to stand before the great white throne. It is sad to see and *feel* how little this solemn event seems to affect us. Who can tell but it may be the precursor of other displays of the Lord's righteous hand? May I and others be taught to prepare for the Lord's coming! I am still enabled to continue worship morning and evening (with occasional interruptions in the morning) in the cabin. In the half-deck and in the forecastle I have the fullest liberty to do all I can for these precious souls. I am sometimes refreshed in these exercises, though I cannot see any special evidences of fruit. 'Let us not be weary in well-doing.' We are now about 1600 miles from the Cape of Good Hope. The weather has been fine hitherto, but this being the winter season in these southern regions it is now becoming cold, and may be expected to be stormy. I go on pretty regularly with my Chinese, and find it gradually become more familiar, although it is evident from the nature of the language that it must require long practice to render it at all natural to a European mind and tongue. I occupy myself much in translating the English New Testament into Chinese, and comparing these rude attempts with Morrison's version. This I find an admirable method of mastering the substance of the language, although the peculiar Chinese manner of thought and expres-

sion can only be fully attained from studying native authors. This I am also practising to a certain extent. . . .

"*Thursday, August 26th.*—Since the previous date we had some very stormy weather, with an intervening calm of some days. The wind, however, when strongest, was favourable, and has been therefore less severely felt. On Tuesday (24th) it blew almost a hurricane from the north-west. I was standing on the poop when a lofty wave broke over the vessel. By its force and the rolling of the vessel I was lifted from the deck, but having a firm hold I was mercifully preserved. My watch was filled with salt water, and the chain snapped. How in a moment might the pulse of life have been thus arrested! 'Thou wilt keep him in *perfect peace* whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' In the cabin our conversation occasionally turns upon the things of God. I have, however, more to do generally in witnessing for our God and Saviour's authority and grace by my own walk than by words. Indeed, when one is so closely connected with others as in the cabin of a ship, a holy and consistent deportment is indispensable in order to maintain without shame a verbal testimony for the truth. I have reason to bless the Lord for much of his comforting presence in this my little cabin, where I am so much alone, and also for timely aid in more public occasions. How holy and how useful is the Lord willing that I should be! This is a solemn thought, involving an unknown amount of responsibility. 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name,' &c. One of my daily duties is to teach Dr. Morrison's little daughter to read. She had just got the alphabet, but is now making encouraging progress—an interesting child. She commits to memory verses of hymns, and has now got 'The Lord's my Shepherd,' &c. *Jesus*, look on this child, for thy name's sake: Amen. For the last few weeks I have little *nausea*, and am able to make encouraging progress in the Chinese. . . .

"*Entrance of Java Sea (opposite North Island), Satur-*

day night, October 9th.—I am now near the close of another week of mercy and faithfulness manifested toward me on the part of a redeeming covenant God. On Sabbath morning last we were in shallow water, but no land had been seen, the weather being thick. At ten A.M. the curtain was uplifted, and opposite my cabin window appeared the high land of Sumatra at the mouth of Sunda Straits. This joyful sight at this moment served to unite the passengers in a short meeting for divine worship when there seemed little likelihood of their assembling, the steward having brought word that neither the captain nor any of the crew could attend. I sung Psalm cxv. 1–4, 10, read and commented shortly on Ephesians iii., and concluded with prayer. I did not go to dinner, as I wished to seek a right view of the sin of trampling on the Lord's-day, and to praise him for his great mercy in saving our ship's company from the temptation to violate it at Anjer, as they might have done.[1] . . . On Tuesday morning we were within ten miles of Anjer, sailing slowly over a glassy sea covered with the canoes of the Javanese and Malays fishing, or bringing off provisions to offer for sale. Six or seven canoes came under my cabin-window to trade with the captain, &c. I looked out to them, and when they stroked their naked arms and breasts to intimate that they wished clothes, I could only smile, shake my head, and hold up an open book (the book of God), to let them know that I was come to teach them, and not to trade or clothe their bodies. They understood my meaning, and looked to me again and again smiling, as if well pleased; and one man put his hands together as if in the attitude of prayer. In the afternoon God sent us for a short time a favourable breeze, which carried us to Anjer Bay about five o'clock; but left us outside the anchorage, which, owing to the current, we did not reach until seven A.M. of Wednesday (October 6th). . . . I had many quiet opportunities of meeting the natives who

[1] It had been for some days anticipated that they would reach Anjer on the Lord's-day.

came on board to trade. I particularly spoke to two Malays, *Acsan* and *Cassiden*, who waited most of the day on the poop in charge of provisions which had been bought and sent on board. In compliance with their entreaties (they are continually begging, and understand a good deal of English here) I covered each of them with a long white shirt (the two made for me by Mrs. Hardy, my worthy hostess at Kingston, Upper Canada), and spoke to them as I best could of Jesus' blood-washed garment of salvation, longing for the time when many of their nation shall be found sitting at Jesus' feet as disciples, thus clothed and in their right mind. A subsequent request which they made for *soap* to keep their shirts clean afforded a new emblem by which to instruct them. I also met a Mr. S——, second mate of the *Regina* of Bombay, a large vessel passing down from China. I found him to be a brother-in-law to Mr. Smith,[1] late Church missionary to China, whose book I have been reading with interest and profit. I gave him two religious books, with an inscribed promise to pray for him. May I remember and be enabled to fulfil all such engagements! . . .

"*Java Sea, Monday, October 11th.*—I had opportunities of speaking further to some of the poor Malays, and learned from them a few words of their language, which seems easy for a European to pronounce. They seem a simple people, rather fitted to obey than to rule; but, as may be expected, they are awfully deceitful. When going to speak to some of them in a canoe close to the vessel, I saw sitting near me on the quarter-deck an old gray-haired man, unlike any person I had before seen. I thought with myself who he could be, but, strange to say, never thought of China as his country until he came round to where I was standing, and I perceived his gray and scanty hair plaited into the *tail* and hanging down his back. He was not like any representation of the Chinese that I had seen, much less *plump* and more intelligent, and he was the first of that great nation that I had seen in

[1] Afterwards Bishop of Victoria, Hong-Kong.

person. I exchanged with him a few words in English, which he spoke very well, and when he learned that I knew a little of Chinese, he took out a paper (a receipt for goods that had been bought from him) written in English and Chinese, to see if I knew the characters. I recognized some of them, and found that I had got the correct pronunciation. I went on deck soon after with a part of the Chinese Scriptures (New Testament), that I might show it to him, but he was just leaving the vessel, and our intercourse ended. I had at least mentioned to him the name of Jesus. . . . On Saturday forenoon we were in company of two vessels from London to China, the barque *Anne and Jane*, which sailed a fortnight before us, and the ship *Marquis of Bute*, which belongs to the same owners as this vessel, and sailed a month later. Her master, Captain Bannatyne, is from Rothesay. He was on board for some hours. It was indeed a cause of thankfulness that all this preceded the Lord's-day; and that on Sabbath (yesterday) no one came near us to be a cause of temptation. We had public worship on the poop as the day was fine. . . . I preached from Matthew xxviii. 18–20, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, &c. And, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' I felt much supported in opening up briefly these mighty words, and had an opportunity of speaking to present circumstances among ourselves, while I showed on the one hand the *duty* of Christ's ministers, and on the other the *duty* and *responsibility* of those *individuals*, *parents*, *masters*, &c., to whom this gospel comes in obeying it themselves, and allowing it to have free course among those placed under them. The rest of the Sabbath I spent in my own cabin, and though there was no further meeting for worship on board, yet I trust the presence of God was among us. The name of the vessel that joined us on Saturday, *Marquis of Bute*, reminds me of circumstances worthy of being recorded, but hitherto omitted. In the month of March last I visited Bute and Arran, preaching in Arran to a divided

people without a minister at Brodick, and in Rothesay to the desolate congregation of the lamented Peter M'Bride, a faithful and much-honoured servant of God, cut down in the midst of signal usefulness, particularly in his native parish of Knapdale, in visiting which he died. When at Rothesay I was asked to preach in the parish of Kingarth at an inn in Kilchattan Bay. The people came out well, many belonging to the Established Church, and some impression seemed to be made. One evening when preaching on 'the new birth,' I made allusion to one whom I had known ten years before in their neighbourhood, who seemed evidently to have undergone that great change. This was Mr. John Smith, the Marquis of Bute's head gardener (at Mountstuart, some miles from where we were), who was a remarkable man of God; but was hated on this account, and at the time of the Disruption was cast out of his situation for following the protesting church. He had died only a few months before, and his memory was sweet to many and to me also, as I had often enjoyed, along with James Denniston, the solemn privilege, when we were teaching in Bute as tutors during the summer months, of visiting his abode and being benefited by his heavenly converse and prayers. Having been led to ask about his widow, I determined to call on her in returning to Rothesay, at the cottage which he had built in the midst of a garden which he had rented, and which he cultivated in his last days for his support. I somehow deferred, however, my intended visit until the last time that I passed from Kingarth, and this was well ordered. The last evening I was there the poor people insisted on my accepting a few pounds as a token of their gratitude, and to defray my expenses. I refused it as I was not in want, but had at last to yield. The following day I called on Mrs. Smith, found her unwell and troubled in other ways. Her husband had been always open-handed, saying the *marquis would not see him want* in his old days, and now he was gone, and his poor widow said few inquired how she was provided for. She told me what I had not

heard, that her husband held many meetings for prayer in Kilchattan Bay, and that when debarred by the factor from the people's houses, he hired the very room where I had spoken of him, and met the people there, and that he was in the act of beginning one of these meetings when the letter was put in his hands which dismissed him from his place. I had worship with her—poor woman—reading Psalm xxxvii. as applicable to his case, and then told her of the money that had been given me, and that I doubted not God intended it for her. She wept as she received it, saying, 'That will just free me from my difficulty. The term is near, and on Saturday I had to say to the collector for the schemes of the Church for the first time that I could give nothing.' Of the other places which I visited when last in Scotland I spent the longest time in Montrose and neighbourhood, ministering to a vacant congregation in the town, and to Mr. Bain of Logie's congregation during his absence at Malta. No very remarkable blessing appeared in either place, but among Dr. Brewster of Craig's people—especially the children in the school at the fishing village—a gracious work of the Holy Spirit seemed to be going on, chiefly through the instrumentality of the female teacher. Preaching there in the beginning of winter I met their venerable pastor,[1] who seemed to be ripening for the Lord's garner, and was a few months after called away. I also there met once more that dear man of God, Andrew Bonar of Collace, who had been there before, but Barnabas-like, 'seeing the grace of God, he was glad,' and returned again to exhort, instruct, and comfort them. At Logie I found Mr. T. usefully employed as teacher and elder, one of those who professed to have experienced a change of heart during the awakening at Aberdeen in 1840. When at Manchester in the month of May I found also Mr. M.,

[1] The Rev. James Brewster, D.D., brother of the late distinguished Sir David Brewster, and himself a man of fine culture as well as deep piety. He was our father's near neighbour in his first parish, and an endeared and valued friend.

converted at Dundee, and Mr. J. from Perth, both employed as missionaries, and coming forward to the ministry. May all such prove to be indeed living branches of the true Vine, and bear much fruit by *abiding* in Him!

"*Monday, October 25th.*—Since the previous date I have been able to do comparatively little at the Chinese on account of the heat, which has been very great and oppressive. We have made good progress during the last week, and are now about seven hundred miles only from our destination. We are to-day, however, nearly becalmed, and the future is with our God, who reigneth over all. . . . Taking into view the state of my own soul, and my future prospects in *nearing* the coast of China, I felt it duty to spend the rest of the day (Sunday, October 24th, after divine service) in my own cabin, and did not leave it to dinner or tea, or indeed at all. I trust my soul feasted in the Lord's presence, and upon his truth and grace. My heart visited many past scenes of labour and many far-distant friends and brethren in the faith of Jesus; and I enjoyed more than usual liberty and depth both in confessing sin and in pleading for grace to myself and others. . . . I have often found of late the chapters in Mr. M'Cheyne's Calendar for the daily reading of the Scriptures exceedingly suitable to my wants. His *Memoir* and *Remains* also I find now more valuable than ever. I am reading also again, and with new interest as we approach the scene of his labours, the memoirs of Dr. Morrison the Chinese missionary. The earlier part of these memoirs especially contains a precious development of his very genuine and eminent spiritual character. He appears to have been indeed an upright servant of the living God. Oh! for grace to follow in this respect in his footsteps. Dr. Milne was a precious man of God, and his Chinese tracts—some of which I have—seem to be of much value. In these, his works, I doubt not, will follow him. His life by Philip has too much of Dr. Philip and too little of Dr. Milne to possess all the interest and importance which might belong to such a work.

And yet some of the biographer's views seem striking and useful.

"*Monday, November 8th.*—Subsequently to the previous date for about ten or twelve days we had calms or very light winds, so that we made little progress except to the eastward. The captain was glad at getting so far to the east (close to the coast of Luzon, a large island belonging to the Spaniards, in which Manila is the chief port), as he counted on meeting the north-east monsoon, and so running direct across towards the north-west to Hong-Kong. But how short-sighted is human wisdom even in these natural things! On Saturday night last it began to blow a gale which continued to increase during the whole of Sabbath, and since this morning has been so very severe that some part of the main-mast has been blown away, and until this moment (half-past eight o'clock P.M.) we are running *under bare poles, i.e.* unable to carry the smallest sail, at the mercy of the winds and waves, or more truly at the mercy of that living God 'who bringeth the wind out of his treasures.' During the day the wind was from the west, and we were fast drifting towards the land, which is thought to be very near. Had this continued our danger must have soon been imminent; but as it is ordered in the Lord's mercy, the wind has gone more into the south, and though the storm still rages we drift rather towards our wished-for port, and the hope of deliverance gladdens every heart. I trust these things are ordered for spiritual good to some or many, as well as to manifest the glory of a present God. I have been kept in perfect peace hitherto, I trust, from having the mind stayed on the Lord. The Lord has also wondrously again begun to open a door among us for delivering the testimony of his truth. On Thursday week I found unexpectedly a favourable opportunity of asking again that public worship should be resumed;[1] and had the request granted *cordially*, although I was still to be confined to

[1] There had latterly been less liberty in this respect than he had at first hoped.

worship in the cuddy, and not to go into the forecastle. I took the liberty thankfully; but again renewed my protest against the restriction. Worship accordingly was held every night until this storm began, which made yesterday a silent Sabbath; and this evening, when I did not think of proposing worship, it was requested for the first time by one of the passengers. Thus I trust the truth is gaining ground among us. The moral atmosphere of our society has been for weeks past a good deal purified. Sung Psalm xlvi.; read Isaiah xxvi.

"*Tuesday Evening, November 9th.*—During last night the storm abated, and this morning revealed the land very near —about twelve or fifteen miles off. Had the storm overtaken us fifteen hours sooner our peril must have been imminent, as we were then within six or eight miles of the shore; and as it was, had the wind not changed from west to south we must soon have been in great jeopardy, and in still greater suspense and alarm. We have been during to-day advancing prosperously on our course, and I do trust that that almighty and holy Being whose mercies have been so great has still greater, even saving mercies in store for many among us. I am encouraged to hope this more than before, after having been much cast down about an hour ago. No one came at worship time, and the captain came in, looked at the barometer, and went on deck. I had gone into my cabin, and was spreading the matter before the Lord when the steward came to tell me the captain was waiting for worship. We had only him and Dr. Morrison, but the meeting was sweet; portion in order, Cornelius and Peter, &c.—opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles, Acts x.; and from some conversation after we had concluded I entertain the hope that I may soon have full liberty as before to visit among the crew. Should it be so, may the Holy Spirit be present giving liberty to preach Jesus crucified for sin as the refuge for dying souls, and spiritual liberty to every soul to receive him as a Saviour and Lord unto eternal life! Jesus hath the key of David. He openeth and no man shutteth. It is five months this day

since I came on board this vessel. *The Lord hath been gracious and true!*

"*Hong-Kong, Tuesday, December 7th.*—After the storm of November 8th we had favourable winds, and anchored in Hong-Kong Bay at midnight on Saturday the 13th. On Monday I came on shore, meeting a very kind and Christian welcome from the friends of the gospel here, and finding such doors of useful labour immediately opened to me, as confirm me in the soundness of those convictions of duty which brought me here. I am most comfortably boarded with a Mr. and Mrs. Power, close to the mission premises of the London Society. Mr. Stevenson[1] has been prevented from coming out to minister to the Presbyterians here, and this gives me a greater hold of my own countrymen, to whom I have opportunity of preaching once every Lord's-day in the London Society's chapel. My progress in Chinese is slow compared with my desires; but still I hope encouraging considered in the view of the difficulties of this very peculiar and hard language. On my arrival I was permitted once more to hear from my beloved parents—all well. Our deliverance from the perils of the deep appears now the greater, since we have heard within the last few days that the *Anne and Jane* from London, with which we were in company in the Java Sea, was on the 8th ult. driven on shore near Manila and totally lost. All, however, were saved except one of the crew and a passenger, Mr. Rogers from Edinburgh, who were washed off a raft to which they had betaken themselves, and were drowned. Another vessel also narrowly escaped, getting into Manila with the loss of all her masts."

[1] The Rev. George Stevenson, now of Pulteney Town, Wick, an early and much valued friend, who had been invited to undertake the pastoral charge of the Free Church congregation at Hong-Kong, but had been by providential circumstances prevented.

CHAPTER XIII.

1847.

THE FIELD AND ITS PIONEERS.

"CHINA proper is a compact territory. You would only need to cut off a few projections and fill up a few indentations in order to bring it into either a circle or a square; for its length and breadth are nearly equal. It includes more than a million square miles; and lying between the twentieth and forty-second parallels of northern latitude, it enjoys on the whole an excellent climate. Two noble rivers[1] flow down its centre, and fertilize the most populous regions in the world. The ocean, sprinkled with islands, washes its eastern and southern coasts. The mountains of Thibet are its western barrier; and on the north it is still guarded by a wall thirteen hundred miles in length, which it cost the united labours of the nation to erect two thousand years ago. Over this wall or over these mountains, you instantly land on bleak deserts and barren wastes; and it is no wonder that in contrast with the encircling solitudes, the Chinese should have called their teeming soil, 'The Flowery Land.'

[1] The Hwang-ho and Yang-tze-Keang, the "Yellow River" and the "Son of the Ocean."

"Wide as the surface is, the swarming inhabitants require it all. From the safest calculations, as the imperial census, the present population cannot be less than three hundred and sixty millions, or a third of the world's inhabitants. To stow away such a multitude needs the utmost economy of room; and in its expedients for squeezing existence into the smallest possible compass, the Chinese continent resembles the cabin of a ship. Crops are grown in places where you would think none but the birds could have planted them; and in their anxiety to leave every inch available for culture, they contrive to put past themselves and their families in all inconceivable corners. They cannot double their area, but their genial sky allows them to double their harvests by sowing two crops in the year; and as land is so precious, many of this evenly-minded and compressible people are content to live on the water. Most of their rivers are strewed with these floating cottages."[1]

But in truth the crowded life of the Chinese people is due not so much to the narrowness of the land, as to the variety of its surface. The sterile and inhospitable character of a large part of the empire compresses a population which on the average is not more dense than that of England into a comparatively limited space. To the west are vast mountain ranges, with giant peaks, frowning gorges, and forests of cedar and of pine; in the centre is a hilly region, gradually softening down into those gentle breezy slopes on which the tea plantations flourish; while

[1] *China and the Chinese Mission*, by the Rev. James Hamilton, pp. 1, 2.

to the east and seaward there stretch out wide and fertile plains, studded with towns and villages, and cultivated every inch like one vast garden. It is this last region that constitutes that teeming hive of human life with which we are familiar, and of which alone till recently we could be said to possess any authentic knowledge.

The people are quiet, industrious, orderly, mechanically civil, and artificially refined, deeply sunk indeed, like all heathen nations, in ungodliness and sin, but addicted rather to the quieter than the ruder vices. They are intensely sensual, but not fierce or cruel; though the very apathy and shallowness of their nature renders them on occasions singularly reckless of the shedding of blood. They love their children, and have more than any other heathen people of the sentiment of home and family life; and yet the inconvenience of an overcrowded country induces them to expose by myriads their female offspring.

Their religion is a strange medley of diverse creeds, dwelling together in peace, and blending more or less together in the ideas and life of the people. "The first of these was founded by Confucius in the sixth century. It is the religion of the literati, and of the present emperor; but there is no reason why it should be called a religion, except that its votaries believe in nothing besides. It consists of a few moral and practical maxims, and evades the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. The Confucians are the atheists and the philosophic utilitarians of China. Next comes the Taou sect, whose founder, Laou-tsze, lived in the days of Confucius. Unlike the Confucians, who believe in nothing supernatural,

the followers of Laou-tsze have peopled earth and air with all sorts of spirits and demons. They deal in magic, and are constantly consulting maniacs and others whom they deem possessed; and it used to be their great problem to discover the elixir of immortality. They are the fanatics of China. And then we have a sect not of Chinese but Indian origin, and far more popular than the other two, the Buddhists. The object of their ambition is to lose all personal identity, and be absorbed into Buddha. Contemplation and abstraction of mind are their highest enjoyments, and to lose all contact with earthly things—to live 'without looking, speaking, hearing, or smelling,' is the nearest approach to perfection. They are the mystics and ascetics of China."[1] Such as it is, the religion of this strange and singular people obtrudes itself everywhere. The land teems with images. "Their temples, houses, streets, roads, hills, rivers, carriages, and ships, are full of idols; every room, niche, corner, door, and window, is plastered with charms, amulets, and emblems of idolatry."[2]

Add to these particulars one or two characteristic features more,—their singular reverence for the tombs and for the memories of their ancestors,—their ancestral tablets and ancestral religious rites; their one written, and their many spoken, languages; their universal system of education and of literary examination and degrees, upon which, by a remarkable anticipation of our recent civil service reforms, the appointment to all public offices of

[1] *China and the Chinese*, pp. 9, 10.
[2] Medhurst's *China*, p. 219.

trust and profit depends; their strange and whimsical, but often rich and showy costume—the tails and silk robes of the men, and the cramped feet of the women; their eager curiosity, especially in the inland districts, about the persons and the movements of strangers, making the hapless traveller often ten minutes after his arrival the centre of an excited crowd, which fills doors and windows, and almost stops the traffic of the streets; their fortune-tellers, their story-tellers, their jugglers, and their rude but vastly popular stage-plays, held in the open air, at the expense usually of some rich citizen, and open to all comers; their pleasant life in canals and rivers, in boats which serve often for weeks together both for locomotion and lodging, and which, moored close to the gate of some populous town or city, make the stranger at once at home in the place of his sojourning; their multitudinous and meaningless religious ceremonies, in which there is scarcely anything of religion or religious belief; and in fine, their measurement of time not by weeks but by the periodical recurrence of market-days, evermore painfully reminding the missionary that he dwells in a Sabbathless land;—and we shall be able to form a tolerably distinct idea of the circumstances and scenes in the midst of which we have now to place ourselves, and with which, in the course of our narrative, we shall become more and more familiar.

Towards this vast and interesting field the missionary spirit of the Christian Church was at a very early period directed. The charm of mystery and distance exercised a certain fascination over imaginative minds, in behalf of a people whose peaceful industry and prosaic artificial

civilization lent to them little of the interest of romance. Ardent spirits longed to pierce the barriers of that great unknown land, and to claim the first kingdom of the far east for Christ. As early, probably, as the seventh century, certainly as early as the eighth, Christian missionaries from the Nestorian Churches in Persia found their way to China, and sowed the seeds of a Christian belief and profession, the traces of which survived, though with little power or purity, for several centuries.[1] During the twelfth century the western world was filled with rumours and tales, probably not altogether without a basis of truth, of a Christian king ruling over a Christian people in the country immediately to the north of China; who under the name of Prester John exercised the functions at once of priest and king, and handed down both name and office to his successors for several generations. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we trace the footsteps of pioneers of nobler mould and of more pure and enlightened Christian views, conspicuous amongst whom was the Franciscan John de Monte Corvino; a man, says Neander, "in whom we recognize the pattern of a true missionary." After labouring for a season in Persia and India, he found his way at length to Pekin,[2] obtained influence and favour at the imperial court, translated the New Testament and the Book of Psalms into the vernacular tongue, laboured for the education of the young and the rearing up of native missionaries, baptized six thousand converts and founded two churches, one of which was so near the royal palace, that the emperor could hear in

[1] See Neander's *Church History*, v. 115. [2] Anciently, Cambalu.

his chamber the voices of the children singing the praises of God. While yet only fifty-eight years in age he had already grown gray in the midst of labours and hardships whose record is on high, and the results of which the day shall declare.[1] He was no unworthy precursor to another, bearing a still more illustrious name, who appeared on the scene two centuries and a half later. In the year 1553 the ardent and holy Francis Xavier arrived at the island of Sancian, on his way to the neighbouring coast of China, on the evangelization of which he had set his heart. After all his labours in India and Japan, he deemed that he had accomplished nothing unless he had unfurled the standard of the cross in the great eastern empire, and claimed possession of its vast domains for Christ. After manifold obstacles and difficulties he seemed at last on the eve of the accomplishment of his cherished purpose. From the little islet on the shore he could look across to the rocky coast of the land which he so ardently longed to enter, and was in daily expectation of a native merchant junk to convey him there. His purpose was to land furtively under cloud of night; he was almost sure to be seized and imprisoned ere yet he had almost begun his work; but he would at least, he thought, have Chinese fellow-prisoners, and in their hearts he might sow the seeds of a harvest that should spring up after he was dead. But the great Master who so often accepts the purpose for the deed, and in whose vast field of labour "one soweth and another reapeth," had ordained it otherwise. While still waiting for the expected vessel, he was seized with a virulent

[1] Neander, vii. 76–77.

fever, under which he sunk. "Stretched on the naked beach, with the cold blasts of a Chinese winter aggravating his pains," he wrestled alone with the last enemy, yet his countenance was lit up with heavenly brightness, and tears of holy joy streamed from his eyes, as he exclaimed with his last breath, "O Lord, in thee have I trusted! I shall never be confounded."[1] The fallen standard was soon taken up by other and not unworthy hands. The Italian Jesuit, Valignano, halting at Macao on his way to Japan, cast his eyes wistfully towards the neighbouring shores of China, still sternly closed against the gospel, and exclaimed, "O Rock, Rock, when wilt thou open!" Not satisfied with mere aspirations, he deputed two of the ablest and most devoted of his companions to attempt an entrance into the forbidden territory. The enterprise was successful. With that remarkable combination of zeal and subtlety which is characteristic of their order, they contrived to establish themselves on Chinese soil, first under the disguise of Buddhist priests, and then under the garb of Chinese literati; and a few years afterwards we find one of their number, Matthew Ricci, filling an important literary office at the capital, and high in the favour of the emperor, while labouring with devoted zeal for the propagation of the faith which he had come to preach. He died in 1610, amid the tears of his brethren and the reverential mourning of the entire community, having spent twenty-seven years of incessant labour in China, and leaving behind him more than three hundred churches in a land in which he had been in modern times the first

[1] In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.

Christian missionary. After him followed in succession Adam Schaal (ob. 1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (ob. 1688), men in every way worthy to tread in his footsteps, and to carry forward the work which he had so auspiciously begun. Like him they were men of science as well as men of faith; and as in his case, a position of influence and honour was speedily opened to them as savans, which would have been denied to them as missionaries. But though they were patronized and protected not for the sake of their message, but for their skill in arranging the calendar, casting cannon, and negotiating treaties, they seem never to have lost sight of the great purpose of their mission, for which alone they sought to live and were ready any moment to die. While themselves pleading the cause of Christ at the court and in the capital, they were enabled at the same time to stretch their protecting shield over their humbler brethren in the provinces, and to further the admission of fresh labourers within the jealously guarded bounds of the empire. Of the extent of their success we may form some estimate from the fact that in the single year 1671, in which, after a season of persecution, their churches were again opened, but all attempts at conversion were prohibited, we find mention of no fewer than 20,000 baptisms; of its quality, however, in a scriptural and evangelical point of view, it is more difficult to judge. It is impossible wholly to separate the character of the men from the deadly poison of the system in which they had been born and bred, and which must have shed its pernicious influence more or less into all their teaching. Yet we are permitted to believe that the one foun-

dation at least of saving doctrine really *was* laid. "Their earlier tracts," says Dr. James Hamilton, "are very different from the legendary stuff circulated in Popish lands. A missionary well acquainted with them says, 'On the Trinity and incarnation they are clear; while the perfections of the Deity, the corruption of human nature, and redemption by Christ are fully stated; and though some unscriptural notions are now and then introduced, yet all things considered, it is quite possible for humble and patient learners to discover by such teaching their sinful condition, and trace out the way of salvation through a Redeemer.' And as some of their first missionaries were earnest men, and evinced their zeal in cheerful martyrdom, some of their converts appear to have been exemplary Christians." It is impossible, for instance, to read without deep interest of the learned Mandarin Paul, so called because on his conversion he desired to be the apostle of his countrymen, and who henceforth lived only to advance amongst high and low the cause he loved: or of his widowed daughter Candida, who after providing for those of her own house, consecrated the whole remainder of her fortune to the service of Christ—founding churches, printing Christian books, building hospitals for outcast children, teaching the blind story-tellers in the streets to tell, in place of their fabulous tales, the story of the Cross,—who gained even from the emperor the title of "the virtuous woman," and "was bewailed when she died by the poor as their mother, by the converts as their pattern, and by the missionaries as their best friend."[1] So we may

[1] Medhurst's *China*, 228.

fondly trust that the unwearied faith and patience of so many devoted labourers, albeit with defective or erroneous views of the truth they loved, were not unowned by the Master, and that amid much earthly dross there may have been many grains of precious gold, which shall be found "unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." From the days of Verbiest until now, the Romish church has never been without its representatives in China. Of these the French missionaries De Fontaney, Gerbillon, Bovet, and Le Comte, with their successors during the 18th and 19th centuries, were especially distinguished for zeal, ability, and success. Hindered and interrupted often by imperial interdicts or open persecution, they still held their ground and laboured unceasingly, sometimes openly, sometimes secretly, for the propagation of the faith. At the time at which our narrative begins they numbered 170 missionaries and upwards of 200,000 converts. Meanly as we may estimate the character of their work or the quality of its results, to them belongs the undisputed honour of having been first in the field, and of having held forth a bright example of faith and zeal, which the Reformed Churches were but too slow to follow.

In the year 1806 Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, was set apart to the work, in Swallow Street Scotch Church, London, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, and arrived at Macao on September 4th, 1807. "There, in a warehouse which he rented, he plodded on in his secret labours at the language, hardly venturing out among the suspicious inhabi-

tants, and hiding the lamp by which he studied behind a volume of *Henry's Commentary*. After ten years of toil he completed a herculean task, and printed in six quartos a *Dictionary of Chinese;* and after being joined by a like-minded labourer, Dr. Milne, had the happiness to translate into Chinese the entire Word, which, by the amazing ingenuity and industry of a brother missionary, was printed in a new and beautiful style." He was a man indeed singularly fitted by the gifts alike of nature and of grace for the work which he had undertaken, and specially at the particular stage which that work had then reached, with "talents rather of the solid than of the showy kind; fitted more for continued labour than for sudden bursts of genius," and with a shrewd caution which was of great price in "a station where one false step at the beginning might have delayed the work for years." For eighteen long years he laboured on unobtrusively and unweariedly, himself but little seen, but his eye ever fixed on the Master and the Master's business. He died in 1834, having been preceded twelve years by his beloved brother and true yoke-fellow Dr. Milne. Though the time of fruit was not yet, they were honoured to gather some precious firstfruits of China unto Christ, conspicuous amongst whom were Leang Afah and Keuh Agang, who long survived them as consistent disciples and zealous and successful preachers of the gospel. But their work was that of pioneers rather than of cultivators of the land; gathering little fruit themselves, but preparing the seed for many harvests yet to come. Their true monument is the Chinese Bible and the Chinese

College,[1] and the enduring memory of that "work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope" in the midst of all discouragements and difficulties, by which, though dead, they yet speak to all that follow after them, and which shall be remembered to their honour in that day "when they that sowed and they that reaped shall rejoice together." They will be ever recognized and honoured as the true fathers of the Chinese Protestant Missions and of the Chinese Protestant Church.

With the opening of the five ports to foreign residents and foreign traffic in 1842,[2] just eight years after Morrison had closed his work on earth, a great impulse was naturally given to the cause of Chinese missions, and representatives of all the great societies in Britain and in America speedily hastened to the field. Within four years there were already in China, or on the way to it, fifty Protestant missionaries. The field so long jealously guarded and hedged around was suddenly thrown open

[1] The Anglo-Chinese College founded at Malacca, in 1818, for the cultivation of English and Chinese literature, and thereby promoting the propagation of Christianity in the far East. Dr. Morrison himself made the munificent offering of £1500 towards the carrying out of this object, in which we must recognize the true precursor of the educational missionary institutes originated by Dr. Duff in Hindustan twenty years later.

[2] By the treaty of Nanking, 1842, the ports of Canton, Amoy, Foo-Chow, Ning-po, and Shanghai were opened, and Hong-Kong was ceded to Britain. By the treaty of Tien-sin, 1858, the ports of Neu-Chwang, Teng-Chow, Tai-wan, Swatow, and Kien-Chow, and the river Yang-tse-kiang up to Hankow were opened to commerce. By convention of Peking, 1860, Tien-sin was opened to trade, and Cowloon ceded to Britain.

and lay white unto the harvest, and eager reapers were hastening from every side to cut it down.

Such were the main incidents in the past history of the work on which the subject of this memoir now entered, with the ardent zeal of a Xavier, with the patient constancy of a Morrison, and with a consecration of heart and an abnegation of self equal to any of those who had ever trod that distant shore.

CHAPTER XIV.

1847—1850.

BREAKING GROUND.

"FORTY years have elapsed," said the Rev. James Hamilton, in his report to the Synod early in the next year, "since a young man, a native of Newcastle, and brought up in one of our Presbyterian Churches, effected his circuitous and almost clandestine passage as the first Protestant missionary to the Chinese empire. Arriving solitary on a shy and unwelcoming shore, with no Christian friend to cheer him, and no European arm to shelter him, that faithful servant of Jesus spent years of lonely and perilous toil in conquering a language with which scarce an Englishman had dared to grapple. But many a happy change, the harbinger of changes happier still, may thankfully be recognized in Mr. Burns' entrance on his work. Proceeding boldly to his destination, an honoured passenger in one of Britain's gallant argosies, and needing no alien interposition to smuggle the evangelist into a land which Britain *then* forbade the evangelist to tread, landing in open day, and beneath the glad assurance of the Union banner, he found the missionaries of two hemispheres, as well as Chinese Christians, there before him. And whilst we would join our dear friend in

commemorating these bright distinctions of his lot, we record with special thankfulness the progress which he has already made as a Chinese scholar. The wonderful labours of Morrison and his coadjutors notwithstanding, the language still remains of all human dialects the mightiest barrier to intercourse; . . . and with all the helps afforded by his predecessors in this arduous work, and with all the facilities for quiet and unmolested study in an English settlement, we fully reckoned that years might pass before Mr. Burns could make any practical essay in that appalling tongue. Already, however, before faith and energy its terrors seem to disappear; and although it is only a year since our brother began to apply his mind to the study, and though he had only been two months arrived when last he wrote—we record it with joy and wonder—he was already attempting to publish the Word of life in the speech of Sinim. Having obtained access to the prisoners in the public jail, he was enabled to read the Scriptures to them, and even to address them briefly so that they understood."

To this last incident he thus refers in his journal of date January 4th, 1848:—

"During the past month I have been making some progress in the Chinese, and have had some opportunities of bringing into use the measure of knowledge already acquired. A fortnight ago Dr. Morrison (whose little daughter I still give a lesson to, and with whose Chinese comprador I read the Scriptures in English and Chinese) asked me to go and visit in the prison three Chinese criminals under sentence of death for murder, and who were

in deep distress and anxious to be visited by the ministers of Christ. Unable to do much, I felt called to do what I could; and as the execution of the sentence was delayed longer than usual in consequence of the absence of the governor, I had almost daily opportunities of meeting these poor men. I generally went alone, but at other times in company with the Chinese preacher Chin-Seen. They were very anxious to hear of the way of salvation through Jesus, and evidently strove to understand my broken Chinese. Although unable to say much to them I made them read with me Christian books, and on several occasions I even joined with them in prayer, through the medium of their own tongue. They did not speak the Canton dialect, which I am chiefly studying, and this no doubt made my rude attempts less intelligible; yet I felt encouraged, and enjoyed, I think, something of the power of grace in praying with and for them. One of these poor men has received a commutation of his sentence."

This first beginning of his work in the sphere of direct missionary effort is characteristic, and must have been peculiarly congenial to him. Like that divine Master in whose steps he walked so closely, it was ever his delight most of all and first of all to care for those for whom few else cared, to leave the ninety and nine in the safe and quiet pastures, and go to seek the utterly lost in the far wilderness. The publicans and sinners in the highways and hedges, the neglected crowds of railway labourers or factory workers, the soldiers in the rough barrack-room, or amid the terrible temptations of the great city streets, had ever, in his native land and in Canada, had a special

attraction for him, as those to whom, as most needing, he owed the deepest debt of compassion and help. He loved to walk like Christ on the shady side of the world, and to be as a "brother born" to the sorrowful, the outcast, the forsaken. And so it was that in China by a singular coincidence it happened that his first care was directed to that very class to whom three hundred years before the apostolic Xavier had looked as the probable objects of his first missionary efforts—only that now in these happier times, it was not needful to become a prisoner in order to become the teacher of prisoners. It was quite in the spirit too of his whole life thus immediately to begin his work with such imperfect means of communication as were then at his disposal, instead of waiting until a more perfect knowledge of the language should have given him the advantage of clear and fluent utterance. In haste to reach the souls of those he had come so far to seek, he was impatient of the last barrier that still separated him from them; and if he could not yet break down that partition wall, he might yet at least hold broken converse with them through those narrow chinks and openings which he had already made. He could speak only, indeed, with stammering words and broken sentences; but those stammering words and broken sentences might still convey some grains of the precious gold—reflect some glimmerings of the eternal saving light—and that infinite blessing he dared not even for a moment withhold. Besides, while seeking to teach those poor prisoners the way of life, he would be at the same time learning something from them. He would sharpen and polish his rude in-

strument in the very act of using it, exercise his stammering tongue and correct his broken sentences, while by their means he sought to instruct and comfort others. It was on the same principle that, as he tells us in his first letter from Hong-Kong, he from the first attended regularly the daily Chinese service conducted by natives at the mission-house, and gave lessons in English to the boy that waited on him along with another, while "they repaid him with their Chinese, which he endeavoured to speak with them as best he could; sometimes succeeding in being understood, and sometimes provoking a smile only." Dr. Hamilton I believe is perfectly right in attributing his remarkable success in mastering the difficulties and disarming "the terrors" of this singular tongue mainly to the "faith and energy" with which he girded himself to the task. He had indeed naturally a more than ordinary faculty for the study of language, and that faculty had at an early period received the very best discipline and training; but the natural faculty was more than doubled by the intense and concentrated energy with which, when called for by the highest ends, he used it. Here, as in everything else which concerned the service of his divine Master, whatever his hand found to do he did it with his might. As before in the case of the French in Canada, so here he might be said for the time to have almost wholly lived in the element of Chinese thought and Chinese speech. He spoke Chinese, wrote Chinese, read Chinese, heard Chinese, sang in Chinese, prayed in Chinese. Far into the night sometimes might his voice be heard reciting aloud the words of life, or pouring out

his heart before God in the broken accents of that strange tongue which for Christ's sake he had determined with as little delay as possible to make his own. Six years after this, as I heard recently from a relative, when on a visit to England, he surprised a company of friends by suddenly pronouncing the blessing before meat in Chinese, and then calmly repeating the same in English. It was only an extreme instance of that which was in reality the ruling principle of his whole missionary life. From the first and in everything "to the Chinese he became as a Chinese that he might gain the Chinese"—lived in their world, thought their thoughts, spoke their words. It was thus alone, as it seems to me, that he was enabled in after-years, as the prompt and fearless pioneer of the missionary band, to make those rapid transitions from one sphere of labour to another, which required in each case the forgetting of one language and the learning of another. The acquiring of a new Chinese dialect was comparatively an easy task to him, because he lived habitually in a Chinese element, and was thoroughly imbued with the very spirit of all Chinese thought and speech.

The following extracts from his journals and letters will still further illustrate the nature of his work, and the spirit which actuated him during the first, and necessarily in a great measure preparatory and tentative, part of his missionary life:—

"*Hong-Kong, Dec. 27th*, 1847.—MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am again allowed the opportunity of addressing you from this distant shore, that you may know something of

what I am doing, and that I may find at last some vent for those feelings which the thought of those from whom I am so far removed awakens. I have been, since I last wrote, going on with my Chinese studies, and I desire to be thankful that I am enabled to make a little progress, while the difficulties that still remain to be encountered before I can attain to anything like a full mastery of the language, are so many that, were it not for the greatness of the end in view, I would be disposed to abandon the undertaking." Then after referring to his visits to the prisoners, "It is encouraging," he continues, "even already to be able to point even in a few expressions to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world—to that Root of Jesse to whom the Gentiles are to seek and find his rest to be glorious. Among our own countrymen last Lord's-day was interesting, as that on which for the first time a congregation met here in connection with the Presbyterian Church. The place of meeting at present is central and convenient (an old bungalow, immediately behind the club-house); and though the numbers attending may not at first be very large, yet it is hoped that by the blessing of God this may form the beginning of that which shall issue in important results, both among the Chinese and amongst our own countrymen."

To this congregation he continued to minister during the whole period of his stated residence in Hong-Kong, without, however, undertaking the task of constituting a regular church, or "entangling himself in any way that might retard his labours among the Chinese." Meantime, while his spare time and spare thoughts were given to his

countrymen, his main strength and his whole heart were still with those in whose behalf he had come, and with whom, in the whole circumstances of his life, he more and more identified himself. Leaving the comfortable lodging in a European family in which he had been at first received, he removed to a hired house of his own in the midst of the native population, where he might bury himself out of sight with Chinese companions and in a Chinese home. His mode of life there must have been a very humble one in the eyes even of his humbler neighbours, if one may judge from a significant incident which he afterwards playfully told me. There had been some commotion in the neighbourhood in consequence of some petty robbery or other misdemeanour, and an excited crowd was passing before the door in eager pursuit of the culprit. "Oh! you need not look there," cried one from amongst the throng, "*it is only a poor foreigner.*"

"*Corner of Aberdeen Street, Queen's Road, Tuesday, February 29th*, 1848.—During these two months mercy has abounded towards me. May I have grace to bless and glorify the God of my life and salvation! In my work among the British population I have been in some degree encouraged, though not in any manner fitted to show me that they ought to be the principal object of my efforts to promote the kingdom of God. Our meetings on Sabbath continue rather to increase, but on week-days very few attend. Early in January I began to feel my need of having the assistance of some native of this province to read with me, in order that I might get acquainted with the colloquial dialect, and acquire as far

as possible the right mode of intonating each word—a point of the greatest importance in order to effective speaking, and one of the greatest difficulty. The Lord has graciously, I trust, guided me in this. A brother missionary spoke of my want to Mr. Gutzlaff, who kindly furnished me with a teacher, a young man from Canton city, whom I have found very suitable. He came to me on January 25th. After a week or two I found it would be desirable, in order to give full employment to my teacher, and also to open up my way into Chinese society, that I should get him if possible to open a small Chinese school; and I thought it would be well if I could get a house having accommodation for this purpose, and where I might myself live with none but Chinese around me, and so be obliged to speak the language at all times. It is in this view that I have taken the house in which I now am. I entered it a week ago (February 22d), and found myself alone, with none but my two Chinese servants, to whom, however, I had been providentially directed, and whom I found willing from the first day to come and worship with me. We read and have continued to read together in Matthew's Gospel (Morrison's version), and I pray with them imperfectly. These beginnings have encouraged me. 'Who hath despised the day of small things?' Yesterday my teacher came to live here, and he expects to be able to open a school in the lower flat of this house, which was formerly a druggist's shop, and is very suitable for this purpose, and also for collecting a small congregation, should the Lord incline them to come, and give fitness to enter on the solemn work in a manner so public."

But while he thus "thought it good to be left" amongst heathen strangers and amid strange associations and ways of life "alone," he still did not feel lonely. Here as elsewhere to him one place differed from another mainly in the degree in which he possessed the felt presence of God,[1] and enjoyed a holy freedom and enlargement of heart in His service. The chief effect of solitude was to bring him nearer to those from whom for the gospel's sake he had been so far separated, and to impart an increased tenderness and fervour to his affectionate remembrances and prayers:—On the 28th March he writes to his mother:—

"After having had worship with my Chinese family (two servants, a teacher, and three boys) I take up my pen to endeavour to hold some kind of communication, from this distant region of the earth, with those who are dearest to me on it. I feel, as I did last time, the want of hearing from any of you; but I have been comforted in some degree by the absence of any bad news, whether by the papers or by Mrs. K.'s letters. May the living and true God be the God and Redeemer and portion of each of my beloved friends, and be more and more gracious to, and more and more glorious in the eyes of my beloved parents as they advance to the borders of the unseen and eternal world! May you be enabled to say with the divine Psalmist, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon

[1] The reader will remember the touching entry on page 259: "I think I can say through grace that God's presence or absence alone distinguishes places to me."

the earth whom I desire besides thee: my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever!' 'As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' May your faith be as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day! Oh! that I might hear in this far land of those of our dear kindred that as yet love not Jesus, having the eye divinely opened to behold His beauty and preciousness! For myself I am here in the midst of a people of a strange language, and who know not the true God nor Jesus Christ whom he hath sent to be the light and life of men, and yet I cannot say that I am solitary or forsaken. I feel indeed more at home here than I did when I was last among you in Scotland, when the weight of that call which I believe I obeyed in coming here was resting upon me, and making me as a stranger among my own kindred. When I last wrote I had newly taken up my abode here with my Chinese domestics, and had been encouraged by feeling able to read and pray with them (though feebly) in their own tongue. My teacher had not then joined me, and I was uncertain whether he would succeed in getting a school formed on the principles of the gospel. In this, however, I have been encouraged beyond my expectation. He got a few boys to come from a little distance of his own acquaintance, and as soon as he opened the school others came from the neighbourhood of their own accord; so that for the last fortnight he has had regularly from twelve to fifteen scholars. Were we to make any effort I believe we could get more; but in

the first instance I want to go on gradually until the character of the school becomes fixed on right principles, and until I see that it really promises to accomplish more than that which I sought it for at the outset, viz. bringing me into such intercourse with the people as might enable me to acquire the language as they speak it, and might open up the way for preaching the Word among them when I am able to do this. Three of the boys stay with us in the house, and all of them come regularly to worship in the morning, when we have a little meeting of seventeen or eighteen persons in all. The school is of course shut up on Sabbath, but the last two Sabbaths most of the boys have been with us most of the day learning a Christian book, and have also attended Chinese worship of their own accord at the chapel of the London Society, where a native at present officiates. Soon after the school was opened it was interesting to me one morning about six o'clock, and before any one was on foot but myself, to see a Chinese woman with a little boy of eleven or twelve knocking to be admitted to the school. I thought of that blessed time approaching when the mothers of China will bring their children to the feet of Jesus that he may bless them. The Chinese are diligent in learning after their own manner. They begin with the morning light and continue to con over their insipid task (insipid, as we would reckon it) until evening. They are an intelligent and interesting race, and when the gospel takes hold of them in elevating and saving power, they will be interesting in another manner."

Amid such quiet, patient, but unobtrusive labours the

first fourteen months of his residence in Hong-Kong passed away. Longing for great things, yet not despising the day of small things, he was content meanwhile to occupy faithfully the narrow sphere assigned him, and to wait in patience till the great Master should open a wider door. The time, however, was now come for a further and bolder flight. His proficiency in the spoken language of the Canton province was now sufficient to enable him at least intelligibly to declare his message. The shores of continental China with its teeming towns and villages lay before his eyes, and he longed to be in the midst of the vast harvest-field. It was true that as yet the permissive liberty of intercourse with the native population was confined within the limits of the five open ports, nor had any Protestant missionary hitherto extended his labours much beyond their precincts. There would, he knew, be much difficulty and possibly some danger in the attempt; but there was no manifest impossibility, and an impossibility alone was in his view a sufficient hindrance to one who would go forward in a great work in the name of the Lord. He would at least knock at the door, and see whether that divine almighty hand would open it. "You desired," said he in one of his letters, "that three doors might be opened to me,—the door of entrance into the language, the door of access into the country, and the door of admittance for the Lord's truth into men's hearts. The first of these has been opened in an encouraging degree already; and it now remains to seek by prayer and actual trial that the other two doors may be opened also." He announced accordingly the

discontinuance both of his Sunday English services and of the Chinese school at Hong-Kong, and steadfastly turned his face towards the "regions beyond:"—On January 29th, 1849, he writes:—

"The routine of my work hitherto has been in learning the Chinese language, with the important accompaniment of preaching from week to week among my own countrymen. Now, however, I am entering as far as can be foreseen on a new sphere and mode of labour, being about to discontinue my temporary position both among the Chinese and English, and go forth among the people of these shores with the Word of eternal life in my hands, and gradually also on my tongue. Yesterday (Sabbath, 28th) I intimated the discontinuance of my English preaching, and to-day I have given warning to my servants, &c., that the school, which is at present interrupted by the Chinese New Year, will not be again re-opened. To this decision I have been clearly led, as we have yet no prospect of any minister from Scotland, nor of any other missionary who might take up the educational part of the work among the Chinese, and I had but one alternative before me, viz. that of either proceeding to form a church and locating myself among my countrymen and in my Chinese school; or that of leaving both, and going forth into the field at large in order at once to attain in a proper manner the spoken language, and to spread abroad the gospel of salvation among these unsaved millions. This latter course I have felt it my duty to adopt, although it is one accompanied with many difficulties and dangers of different kinds. But the work must be done,

and I am enabled joyfully to say, 'Lord, here am I, send me.' The young man who has been teaching the school and myself will not, I think, return to me; but the other two assistants will go forth, I trust, with me, and perhaps others also. Certainly my past habits and experience fit me above most preachers for attempting this mode of missionary work; but whether, and how far, I may be succeeded in it is with the Lord, at whose command alone I go forth. I need not add that in these circumstances I shall have special need of special prayer to be made in my behalf, and in behalf of the people among whom I may be led from time to time. China is not only forbidden ground to a foreigner, but it is a land of *idols* and a land *without a Sabbath.* How great then must be that power which can alone open up my way and make it successful! But JESUS hath said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth;' and JEHOVAH hath said to the Son, 'Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Let the weak then say, I am strong! I shall not add more by coming down to matters of lesser moment. May the souls of God's people among you prosper and be in health, and may many be brought nigh who are now far off in heart from the living God! With love to all who love the Lord and seek his face,—I am, dear mother, your affectionate son,—WM. C. BURNS."

The event fully justified the decision which he had taken, and the brave and resolute spirit in which he prepared himself for its accomplishment. The difficulties and dangers with which he laid his account were indeed

not wanting, but in the midst of them all his way was opened and his course prospered to a degree which he had scarcely dared to hope. While there were frequent risks from the assaults of robbers and the jealous spirit and policy of the local authorities, he met everywhere amongst the great body of the people with that friendly reception which they have been since found in other cases to accord to any stranger who frankly casts himself upon their kindness. He possessed in large measure that genial human sympathy, and that quiet self-possession and promptitude of fit reply, which, Mr. Fortune tells us, form the best passports to the good humour and friendly entertainment of a Chinese crowd; and a foreigner who trusts himself in places where foreigners are rare must expect to live very much in the midst of crowds. So he found his way with comparatively little trouble or interruption from village to village, and seldom failed at least of a numerous and inquisitive, if not earnestly attentive audience. Even the personal privations and hardships which he had regarded as inevitable were much less serious than he had anticipated: so that he very soon sent back to Hong-Kong a heavy cloak which he had brought away with him, with the significant message that "he did *not* need to sleep on the hills." His chief danger throughout arose from the general repute, sadly belied in his case, of the untold wealth possessed by foreigners, and the consequent sensation produced among the robber-class by the arrival of a European stranger. Anything therefore in the shape of gold, or that looked like gold, he found the greatest possible hindrance to his quiet and peaceful progress, and

a light purse the necessary condition of a light heart. Years after this I remember that when I gave him a small pocket-Bible in place of a much valued one which he had lost, he said with a significant smile, that his only objection to it was the gilt clasp, which he feared would one day attract the greedy eyes of some Chinese robber, and cause the theft of the book for the sake of the gold—an apprehension which was soon afterwards in point of fact fulfilled. From the following extracts it will be seen that such "perils of robbers" were the only serious perils he encountered in this difficult, and as it seemed to many at the time, somewhat daring undertaking:—

"*At Shap-Pat-Hœung* (*or Eighteen Villages*), *February 26th*, 1849.—MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have had the privilege of again hearing from you, and this privilege has been even greater than usual, from the fact which the date of this letter intimates, that I am now no more among our countrymen, but am dwelling among this heathen people —*alone*, were it not for the presence of a covenant God and Saviour. In following out the purpose intimated in my last, I left Hong-Kong on Wednesday the 7th current for the opposite continent of China, and have been, since that time, going from place to place with my Chinese assistants and one servant, much as I used to do in Scotland in days that are past. In some places I have spent only one day; in others I have remained for a longer time, the population being large and the door open. As yet I have been furthered and prospered far beyond what I looked for; and although the difficulties are many, even of an outward kind, yet I do not despond in looking to

the future. One of our difficulties arises from the constant fear the people are in of robbers, who suppose, though in my case without cause, that foreigners have much money with them; and again in places where there are mandarins a foreigner is likely to be dislodged at once. This was my experience at first setting out; for I had spent only one night at Cowloon, opposite to Hong-Kong, when I was warned to remove, and so had to retreat for the time. The people also at present are in constant apprehension of war with England, and this makes them more suspicious of foreigners who come into their borders. But with all this I have hitherto had great liberty of access to the population, and as far as I have been able to declare my message I have found attentive, and in some cases earnestly attentive hearers. . . . The valley I am now in is full of villages, as its name intimates. It is also the seat of a market held nearly every third day, to which the people of the surrounding country resort, and this makes it an important centre of operations. Yesterday—the Christian Sabbath—was the market-day here. I was out among the people about three hours, and had much support from God. What need have I of the presence of the Lord of the Sabbath in a land like this, that I may not lose my own soul in seeking to save the souls of others! I shall probably need to leave this place soon, as the master of the house I am now in does not promise us lodgings even for another night. But the Lord will provide. 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.'"

It will have been observed with what feeling he speaks

of his position in finding himself for the first time in a Sabbathless land, and of the dreary round of the secular market-days, irrespective of all the hallowed mementos and signs of a higher world. He often recurs to this, and evidently felt it as the sorest of all privations—almost like the blotting out of the sun from the sky of his daily life. His words vividly remind one of the feelings expressed by the Psalmist, when, under a similar sense of spiritual deprivation and exile, he remembered the Lord from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar. "When I remember these things my soul is cast down within me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." It was under the impulse of such feelings that he would from time to time break away from his solitary labours amongst those heathen villages, and make a rapid visit to the comparatively Christian community at Hong-Kong, for the sake "of retirement and the privileges of the Christian Sabbath." He snatched one of those seasons of sacred retreat about a month after the date of the letter just quoted: but after a brief space he is again at his work, and dates the 16th April, from "the village of Pān-Seen, to the north of Hong-Kong about eighty-five miles:"—

"DEAR MOTHER,—After writing you from Hong-Kong at the end of last month, I remained there a few days longer, to enjoy the advantage of retirement and the

privileges of a Christian Sabbath, and on the 4th of the present month returned again to this continent of China. Since coming back I have visited four villages of 1000 to 1500 inhabitants each, remaining generally for a few days, and embracing such opportunities as are given me, both in going out among the people, and in the visits which many pay to us, to make known something of the gospel message. We were some time ago invited to come to the village where we now are; and not only do we here enjoy the fullest external liberty to speak to the people, but there are some who receive us with much cordiality, and seem to manifest some interest in our message. One man in particular who this evening worshipped with us seems as if his mind were opening to the truth. But ah! when I speak thus you must not judge of such a case as if it were similar to those which we remember at Kilsyth, Dundee, and Perth, in days that are past! There is among this people no Sabbath, no Bible, no distinct knowledge even of the existence of one only living and true God; and in my present circumstances it is not a little encouragement to find tokens even of a distinct and cordial apprehension of the simplest principles of divine truth. How little are many who neglect the great salvation among you aware that they are indebted for all that is pure and elevated in their knowledge to that holy Book which they despise! Were it not my abiding conviction that the Lord hath sent me here, and that His grace can be made sufficient for us in all circumstances, I would sometimes be overwhelmed when regarding the state of this blinded people, and the danger to which my own

soul is exposed in dwelling among them. From day to day I have enjoyed many tokens of the Lord's guiding and supporting hand; but while this is the case, I cannot say that as yet I have seen any clear indications in the state of this people that the day of their spiritual deliverance is at hand. In other days it has been my solemn privilege to enter into the labours of others, and it may be that here I am to labour where others are to reap. . . . *April 17th.*—This morning I resume my pen in haste to conclude this letter. From morning to morning the Lord's mercies are ever new. Great is His faithfulness. . . . I am about to-day to remove to a village further on. My messenger waits, and I must in haste conclude, praying for all covenant blessings to my beloved parents, kindred, &c., and for grace and peace to all the churches of the living God.—I ever am," &c.

At his first starting from Hong-Kong he had characteristically "left his assistants to direct the boat to any quarter," on the long extended coast, "they thought best," having "no other plan but that of making known the gospel by tracts and speech, leaving all the rest, as well as this the greatest, to the gracious care of God." And so he went on from day to day in his work of faith and patience, passing on from village to village with the divine message, which it was the joy of his life to declare, simply as the Unseen Hand of his Master seemed to open and point the way—now lingering for a while in one spot, now pressing rapidly on, as the Pillar of Cloud appeared to halt or to move onwards before him. "As soon as he reached a village, he commenced to read his Bible aloud,

say, under the shade of a tree—soon the villagers began to gather, and he explained to them the nature and object of the Gospel. Usually some one would ask him at meal-time where he was to eat? and he as usually partook of what was set before him by some hospitable villager. As evening approached, some one would offer him a night's shelter; and thus he often went on from week to week, preaching the word, and lacking nothing." Meanwhile, it was his lot almost wholly "to plough in hope, and to sow in hope,"—intensely longing for the fruit of souls, yet willing either to gather it in with his own hands or to sow the seeds of a harvest to be reaped by others. The entries in his journal are at this period singularly brief and hurried—mere jottings, evidently hastily noted down overnight in the midst of outward discomforts and almost constant movement—but only on that account speak the more impressively of the abundance and self-denying nature of his labours:

"We went to Cowloon, but they took me to a school-house rented by the London Mission, and after one day's stay among a listless people we were obliged to leave in consequence of the mandarin's remonstrating with the landlord of the house. On Thursday the London missionaries came over, and I went back with them to the Chinese Medical Hospital (Hong-Kong). On Friday we again landed directly opposite at Tseen-Shā-Tein, had good openings and favour among the villages, and lodged in a mat-shed—I eating, as I had the previous day, and have done since, with my Chinese companions, but not putting on in the meantime any part of the Chinese dress.

On Saturday we removed to Tseen Wan (Shallow Bay) village, a distance of perhaps twenty-five Chinese miles; the people very friendly, but generally speaking the Hāk-kā, not the Puntee or Canton city dialect. Here we remained until Wednesday (yesterday), when we crossed the hills, a distance of 20 or 25 Chinese miles (probably 7 or 8 English miles), to this valley covered with villages (Shap-Pat-Hœung). To-day I have been out, and have had more encouragement in the aspect of the people, and also in my ability to communicate to them the great truths, (1) That there is but one true God, His character, &c.; (2) That all men are sinners—idolators, &c.; and (3) That there is a Saviour and only one, Jesus the Son of the living God.

"*Shap-Pat-Hœung.*—Much encouraged at Pat-Hœung. Left it on Tuesday the 20th. 21st at Cum-Teen. Many people—attention—at night fear of robbers. 22d. Came here. Door opened. Many people. Attention.

"*Shum-Chan, March 5th, Monday.*—Came here on Friday, after being six days at Shap-Pat-Hœung, and three days at Sin-Teen. People friendly. Arrived on the market-day. Great press to see the foreigner, but all friendly. On Saturday messenger arrived from Hong-Kong—robbed by the way of the money he was bringing. In my own room—not an every-day privilege in this land —*Oh! for the Spirit of grace to improve it.*

"*Chinese Hospital, Hong-Kong, March 29th.*—We staid at Shum-Chan until Wednesday the 14th, visiting the surrounding villages. 14th. Removed westward to Sheung-Poo-Tan, visiting villages to the west, Kak-Teen, Kong-

Ha, Wong-Kong, &c., eight days. At Sheun-Poo-Tan, people very friendly and attentive—Kak-Teen, not so. Thursday, returned to Shum-Chan; invited to go back into the country; crossed the Yuen-Long, and thence on foot to Pai-Teung beside Cap-Shui-Man, and thence by boat to this place—way prospered—arrived here at six o'clock P.M., just as Dr. Hirschberg, a dear brother who gives us lodging here, was about to land from Cowloon, to which he goes every Monday. Here I have ordered a Chinese dress, and I trust that next week I may again go forth into the country. The seven weeks I have already spent there have been full of encouragement."

Brief as these itinerary notes are, they will give the reader a tolerably distinct idea of the character of the missionary's life and work during this first and tentative effort to carry the gospel message into the interior of the Chinese territory. The lodging in the "mat-shed;" the frequent alarms of robbers; the arrival of the messenger from Hong-Kong without the expected money supplies; the summary dismissal by the mandarin and the friendly bearing of the people generally; the eager rush at the market town "to see the foreigner;" the valleys thick-sown with villages; the journeys on foot, without purse or scrip or change of raiment, over the hills; the significant and touching allusion to the rare privilege of a night "in his own room;" the brief breathing time of retirement and prayer, in the midst of the poor and suffering, in the Chinese hospital,—all, naked as they are alike of detail and colouring, form together the elements of a picture of apostolic faith and zeal, and self-denying labour

which rises to the mind's eye as vivid as it is impressive and rare. The reader will have noticed too, the passing allusion to his gradual adoption at this time of the Chinese habits alike in food and in dress; a matter in which, I believe, he has been hitherto almost entirely singular amongst missionaries of the Protestant faith. The circumstance admits of easy explanation. I daresay there was to him a certain charm in being thus entirely like to those whose servant he desired to be for Christ's sake, and thus visibly to walk in the steps of him who would "be all things to all men if by any means he might save some." But that was not his main reason, or one which he himself ever gave. His practice in this respect was singular, mainly because his sphere of labour and his circumstances were singular. Within the limits of the five open ports, or in any place where the sight of a foreigner is a common and everyday occurrence, there was in his view no advantage whatever in the adoption of the Chinese dress and mode of life; but in inland towns and villages it was essential, unless one wished to be the centre of a noisy street crowd, and to be gazed at like a gorilla or an ourang-outang. He found it of the greatest importance, with a view to the peaceful prosecution of his work, to avoid this, and therefore he did avoid it. When Dr. Morrison arrived at Hong-Kong, "he adopted," says Dr. Medhurst, "the dress and manners of the natives, allowing his hair and nails to grow, eating with the chopsticks, and walking about the factory in thick Chinese shoes. In this, as he afterwards acknowledged, he meant well, but he judged ill; for in the first place the confine-

ment and hard fare injured his health; then, his singular habits deprived him of the association of his countrymen; and lastly, his intercourse with the natives was hindered rather than helped by it. Had he been residing entirely among the Chinese, far separated from Europeans, the adoption of the Chinese costume might have prevented immediate observation and conduced to permanent settlement; but in Canton, where there is a marked difference between the Chinese and Europeans, the attempt to unite the habits of such opposite classes only excited the animadversions and suspicions of both. The Catholics in Macao dress all their priests and catechists in the European costume, which is a sort of protection against native interference; *but when they send agents into the interior, they clothe them after the Chinese fashion, in order to avoid the gaze of the populace,* and the *annoyance of the police.*" These sagacious and discriminating remarks, written more than thirty years ago, have been since fully justified by the experience of those who, whether as missionary or scientific pioneers, have passed beyond the lines of European residence, and pushed their way "into the regions beyond." There, for a foreigner simply to show himself in his foreign dress is to become the signal for the assembling of an idle and inquisitive crowd, which grows and swells as he passes along. A graphic instance may be given from Mr. Fortune's interesting narrative of a *Residence among the Chinese, Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea.* "When we landed from our boats," says he, "a large crowd assembled round us, and followed us into the city (Pinghoo), increasing as we

went along. Every now and then a little urchin ran past to give warning on ahead, so that we found the whole street aware of our approach, and every door and window crowded with anxious faces. All went on quite well, however, although the crowd contained some mischievous looking fellows in its ranks. When we entered a shop the scene outside was quite fearful. The street was very narrow and literally crammed with human beings, all anxious to see us and to find out what we were buying. In more than one instance the pressure was so great as to endanger the fronts of the shops; and anxious as the Chinese are for trade, I believe the poor shop-keepers were heartily glad when they got rid of us."[1] An introduction like this into any community could scarcely facilitate the quiet discharge of any serious work, and least of all the furtherance of that eternal kingdom which "cometh not with observation." In rapid missionary journeys, indeed, by canal or river, where the object is simply to distribute books and declare the gospel message at each village and hamlet by the way, and then pass quickly on, the singularity of the European dress may be even of advantage, as signalizing the stranger's arrival, and immediately gathering an eager audience round him. The little unwonted excitement passes off harmlessly, as the strange visitor is off and away before the crowd has grown into a tumult and suspicious citizens and jealous mandarins have taken the alarm. But to make a more lengthened sojourn in such a community, and go about one's work steadily and quietly, one must cease to wear the garb of a stranger.

[1] Pp. 327–328.

After about a week's repose, Mr. Burns was again at his work (April 1st), and continued his evangelistic movements amongst the continental villages for about six weeks longer, pushing his way still further inland to the north and the west. At the close of that period, however, the hot and rainy season rendered further progress for the present impracticable, while at the same time the more suspicious and less friendly attitude of the people as he advanced westward gradually more and more closed the door against him. He accordingly returned to Hong-Kong, and took up his abode in a manner somewhat more permanent, under the friendly roof of his endeared friend Dr. Hirschberg, first on Morrison's Hill and then at his new hospital in Victoria.

Here he remained, with only one brief interruption, for the next eight months, perfecting his knowledge of the Chinese language, and becoming, as he says, less and less "at home with the pen and more with the Chinese pencil;" doing the work of a Barnabas amongst the sick and suffering in the hospital beside him; and co-operating zealously with his esteemed host in all his other works and labours of love. But the nature of his occupations during this quiet interval, as well as the views and aspirations which animated him, will be best learned from his own words, which will appropriately close the history of this first stage of his Chinese life:—

"*Chinese Hospital, Hong-Kong, June 21st*, 1849.—MY DEAR MOTHER,—My last letter would not prepare you for hearing from me again so soon, and that too from this place. I went on last occasion more to the westward

(having already visited a good part of those who speak my dialect to the north), and there we found the people everywhere so averse to the presence of a foreigner, that after sleeping nine successive nights on the water in going from place to place, and not being allowed to lodge on shore, I returned here, where I have again resumed my quiet studies, and where I enjoy opportunities of doing what I can amongst this people, not only in speaking to the patients in the hospital, but in visiting others in the neighbourhood. The season also at present, both from great rain and great heat, is not so favourable for that mode of life which I have been following for some previous months on the opposite continent. I trust that in due time my path may be further opened, and that it may graciously be made plain by the Lord in what way and in what place I am to be more permanently employed upon these shores. I do not think at present of returning to the continent, but it is possible that my path may be made plain to do so sooner than I can anticipate. Perhaps you are by this time aware that Dr. James Young, a much valued friend here, offered himself some time ago to the Presbyterian Church in England as a missionary. The last mail has brought to him the intimation of his offer of service being accepted; but where and how we may be located and employed on these shores is not yet fully determined; nor can Dr. Y. leave his present employment until the close of the present year. It was a great mercy that in my last journey as well as in the two previous ones I was preserved from every danger, although surrounded with perils seen and unseen. The night

before I landed here we were not, I suppose, above half a mile from a Macao passage-boat when it was attacked by pirates and robbed with the loss of some lives. The firing was so loud that, in the darkness, we supposed it must be some English war-steamer in pursuit of pirates. I was at this time on board the Chinese passage-boat from Canton, and no evil was allowed to come nigh to us. The person who has charge of the Chinese hospital where I am now lodged is a converted Jew, Dr. Hirschberg, connected with the London Missionary Society. I have long enjoyed his friendship, and now for a season I am very favourably situated in lodging with him, both for learning the language and for speaking a little among the patients who come seeking cure to their bodily diseases. It is little indeed, however, that I can add regarding tokens of an encouraging nature among the people. But the day of mercy and deliverance promised will come, and then these ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord. You have need to pray for all of us who labour here, that we may be endued with a patient and persevering spirit, for the natural and spiritual difficulties of the field are of no common kind. . . . Commend me, dear mother, to the prayers of God's people. May you and my father never forget me, when, either one or both, you draw near the glorious high throne of our Father in heaven. Jesus is the way. In His blood we have access: in Him we are complete!"

Again, about a month after, July 25th, he writes:—

"I take up my pen (not so much used in these days as my Chinese pencil) to write a few lines that you may

know something of my present affairs. During the past month I have been quietly resident here; and while I have thus enjoyed much leisure for study, I have also had daily opportunities of taking part, both as a hearer and as a speaker, in the meetings which are held for the good of the patients and of the household. As I had no present need for my former native assistants who journeyed with me on the mainland, they left me more than a month ago, and I am thus in the meantime alone, and co-operating with others as formerly at home and in my own tongue. This kind of position suits me, and will probably continue to be my position here until at least Dr. Young is ready to join me, which is not until the beginning of next year. . . . Do not cease, dear parents, to pray for me, that I may be still graciously kept and divinely quickened and enlarged in the way of God's testimonies. The removal of such pillars as John M'Donald and also Sir Andrew Agnew would overwhelm the minds of God's people, were it not that they are not man-worshippers, but have their faith staid on Him who ever liveth, and hath an unchangeable priesthood. While Jesus lives, the Church which is His body shall live also, each member receiving by faith out of His fulness and grace for grace. How securely must the Church of the living God be built, when it can stand unshaken while so many who seemed to be pillars are removed! But in the Church above, those who are 'made' to be pillars 'shall go no more out.' Blessed, holy, glorious society of the redeemed in the presence of God and the Lamb! May our hearts be ever there until amazing grace open the door of that inner sanctuary, and

call us to come in! Oh! when shall the nations on earth—the many millions of these distant Gentiles—hear the call of the Son of God, bringing them into the Church below to be prepared for the Church above! The change will be great indeed when this takes place! May we have grace to pray and labour that the time may be hastened! You will remember me, dear father, to all who ask of my welfare, and engage the praying to pray much and more in our behalf, and that China's gates may be opened to the King of glory!"

One more effort (November, 1849) to resume his evangelistic labours on the mainland, in which he was met with obstacles still more formidable than on the last occasion, and returned, robbed and stripped of everything but the clothes necessary to cover him, and his work at Hong-Kong and its vicinity closed. He sailed with Dr. Young, whose brief but bright career was for the next four years intimately associated with his, for Canton on the last day of February, 1850.

CHAPTER XV.

1850–51.

CANTON.

WE have already remarked that Mr. Burns' labours on Chinese soil had been hitherto mainly preparatory and tentative. The question of a permanent centre of operations for the infant mission had not even yet been determined. The balance of opinion, however, in the home committee had been for some time back turning more and more decidedly towards Amoy, and in this judgment Dr. Young very strongly concurred. Mr. Burns himself so far acquiesced in it as to have actually taken his passage for that port on September 5th, 1849, when his course was arrested by an attack of fever, brought on as he thought by the anxieties of the decision and exposure to the sun during the numerous "salutations" of a hurried leave-taking. The decision, however, had clearly not been taken without some misgiving. On his recovery from illness the suspended purpose was for the present silently dropped, and was never afterwards resumed, until he had fully proved by prayer and earnest effort whether another and still wider door nearer at hand were not open to him. It is probable that from the first, and whilst wandering amongst the villages opposite Hong-Kong, his

eye had been turned towards Canton, the great centre of life in Southern China, towards which at each successive movement westward he approached nearer and nearer. Cowloon, the point at which he first landed, is distant from that city only about ninety miles, and the whole district lying between, and which he had been since traversing, might be regarded as in its immediate vicinity, and as the natural pathway of advance towards it. It was the great centre, too, of that dialect which for the last two years he had been so laboriously studying, and which was the only form of the Chinese spoken language which as yet he knew. Any one, therefore, that knew him might almost have predicted that he would *not* pass it by without making some effort to bring to the ears of its heathen myriads the message of life. It might indeed be that the will of the Master as well as the growing conviction of the Church was calling him elsewhere, and that He had no work for him to do, no people for him to gather "in that city;" but he was unwilling too hastily and rashly to adopt so important a conclusion. He will at least knock at its gates earnestly and patiently, and see whether there were an entrance there for his message and his Master or not.

The prospect at the outset was not very encouraging, nor did it on further trial greatly brighten. The door of entrance even to a settled residence in the city was never fully opened to him. He succeeded, indeed, at last, after many harassing disappointments, in securing the expiring lease of a lodging from a brother missionary about to return to Scotland; but that was only for a period

of eight months, and at its close his position would be as unfixed and as uncertain as ever. In other respects, too, the aspect of the field was scarcely more promising. Whilst he enjoyed abundant opportunities of sowing the precious seed, and was seldom without a goodly group of apparently attentive hearers, yet it seemed to him that his words did not tell upon them. There was attention more or less fixed, but no impression. They listened to the truth, and possibly carried away some glimpses of it, but it did not take hold and keep hold of them. Few of his casual hearers ever came back of their own accord to hear him again, or sought the preacher out to inquire further of his message and his doctrine. He was even tempted sometimes to doubt if the Chinese were in their present state even susceptible of those deep spiritual impressions which he had seen in former days and longed to see again; whether a lengthened period of preparation, and the long and patient sowing of many labourers, might not be necessary ere any one might hope to "return rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him." Yet he went on patiently and hopefully, and speaks of himself as as happy here and in the midst of his self-denying and apparently unproductive work as "he could be anywhere in all the world." There is nothing in his life, as it seems to me, more admirable, and in the whole circumstances of the case more remarkable, than this patient and steadfast continuance in well-doing in the midst of the most prosaic and uninteresting labours, and amid the dead calm of a more than heathen apathy, equally as when borne along by the exhilarating breath of sympathetic enthusiasm

and almost uninterrupted success. "The two works," says Mr. Moody Stuart, "were singularly diverse in their character, and were such as have rarely, if ever before, been allotted to one man to accomplish. Those who knew William Burns only as the enthusiastic preacher from town to town throughout the land would have looked upon him as the last man in the Church who, after eight years of what seemed the highest religious excitement, with thousands crowding to hear him, would set himself to what was then reckoned the almost hopeless task of thoroughly mastering the Chinese language; would seclude himself from his own countrymen, and live among a people so different, teaching their children that he might learn their language, and then adopt their dress, and their ways, till in strange places the authorities were sometimes slow to believe him when he claimed to be an Englishman." Such mainly had been his work for many months at Hong-Kong, and such too, at least not more exciting or spirit-stirring, was his life at Canton. Meanwhile Dr. Young had gone on before him to Amoy, and wrote from month to month most hopefully of the prospects of the work there, and urged him earnestly to join him. He still hesitated. There was not much indeed in the way of positive encouragement to detain him at Canton; no "great and effectual door" visibly opened to him and loudly calling upon him to enter; but yet there was not, on the other hand, any clear and decisive indication that God had no work for him to do there. It even seemed to him sometimes as the months passed on as though a prospect of ultimate success were beginning to dawn upon him, and as he saw

the stolid countenances of his hearers now and then lightening up with something like intelligent and earnest interest, his heart yearned over them with a wistful hopefulness, and he felt as if he could not leave them so long as the faintest hope of a day of power and blessing among them remained:—"If you do not hear," said he, "so interesting accounts from Canton" (as those recently received from Amoy), "you must ascribe it in part to the defects of your correspondent, but still more, it may be, to the difficulties of this very important station—a station so difficult and important, that I believe no agent who is in any degree suited for it, and who has a heart to love and labour for its proud and suspicious people, should be encouraged to leave it. Last Tuesday evening, when looking on an assembly of from fifty to sixty engaged listeners, while a native was addressing them before I did so, my heart said, 'How can I leave these dear and precious souls for whom there are so few to care? I can now tell them of the way of life with some measure of clearness and acceptance, and so long as God gives me standing ground to gather and address them, I must go on to do so, leaving the issues in His own hand, with whom it is to bless and save! Help us to maintain the combat in this great heathen city, until its gates are opened to the King of glory! Brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified!"

But those distinct intimations of the Master's will, for which he had so long waited, came at last. The door he had sought and hoped to enter was finally closed; the standing-ground which alone he desiderated as a warrant

to remain was taken from him. Shortly after the expiry of the lease, he had received notice to remove from the premises he had hitherto occupied, and all efforts to obtain another suitable station had failed. This, taken in connection with the open door and brightening prospects at Amoy, seemed to him decisive of the path of duty. Difficulties in the ordinary sense of the word had little influence with him: rather only did they rouse him to a more determined resolution to "go forward" in the course of service set before him, in the strength of Him before whom the mountains flow down, and whose word is "not bound;" but the slightest indication of His will, the faintest whisper of His voice, was to him imperative. Such an intimation had now, he believed, been distinctly given to him; and he prepared himself without delay to obey it. He sailed from Canton, after a residence of sixteen months, in June, 1851, and reached Amoy on the 5th day of next month.

CHAPTER XVI.

1851–54.

AMOY.

A SAIL of four hundred miles in a north-easterly direction from Hong-Kong, along a bold and precipitous coast, rising occasionally to a commanding elevation, brings us to a group of islands scattered over the wide and spacious estuary of one of those rivers which here and there break the continuity of the rocky barrier. One of these is Amoy, separated from the mainland only by a narrow channel, in the midst of which again lies the smaller islet of Ku-long-soo, facing the town and harbour, and forming in the waters between an inner and safer anchorage. In approaching the city through this inlet, a long line of fortifications, rising from the water's edge and bristling with cannon, frowns upon us from the right, and would be indeed a formidable defence were an invading enemy simple enough to advance in this direction. Though only a small island of nine or ten miles diameter, and consisting mainly of rugged and barren hills, with here and there cultivated valleys running up between them, it contains within its narrow bounds upwards of a hundred towns and villages, and a population of 250,000 souls.

Of this teeming hive of human life, about 150,000 are congregated in the city which occupies the south-west corner of the island. It is a poor place, with close narrow streets, and rather more dirty than most other Chinese towns. "The people have generally an emaciated and sallow appearance, partly from poverty and the crowded state in which they live, but also from the prevalence of opium-smoking. There are upwards of 600 public opium-smoking places, and the drug is said to be used very extensively in private houses."

Though not a place of very great commercial importance, it is, by its position and easy means of communication, a most convenient and commanding centre for missionary operations. Though within the limits of Southern China, it yet forms a sort of advanced post towards the north, with which communication is frequent and easy. Before it lies the vast province of Fo-kien, the great black-tea country, with its teeming myriads of industrious, peaceful, and comparatively friendly people; and behind it, at the distance of a few hours' sail, the beautiful island of Formosa, with its three millions of Chinese-speaking inhabitants. Within a distance of forty miles is a population of some millions, speaking nearly the same dialect, and accessible in all directions by canal and river navigation. The city of Chang-chow alone, of which Amoy may be said to be the port, lying a few miles up the river, contains a population of from 200,000 to 500,000 souls. The view here as described by travellers is magnificent. "I had heard," says the Rev. Wm. Gillespie, of the London Missionary Society, "of the plain

of Chang-chow; now I saw it. From a hill at the back of the city, yet within the walls, a grand panorama presented itself. There lay stretching far up the country a rich and luxuriant strath, and a noble river winding along at the foot of the hills. It reminded me of the strath of Tay."

Over this wide and fertile garden of souls the Christian missionary is free, with scarcely any hindrance, to roam at large. "In visiting Amoy," says the same writer just quoted, "the first thing that strikes a foreigner coming from the south, is the feeling of delight which he experiences in rambling everywhere unmolested. After being forcibly turned back on entering within the gates of the southern metropolis, as has been my experience repeatedly, it is pleasant to revel in the unrestrained luxury of rambling through the streets and everywhere within and without the walls of Cap-che, Amoy, Chang-chow, &c."

Of the circumstances of missionary life in this interesting field, I am tempted to give the following lively and graphic picture from the pen of the Rev. James Johnston, who two years afterwards joined the mission. In describing, to some juvenile correspondents, the "Gospel Boat," in which he performed his missionary journeys, he says:—

"It is not like anything you have seen in England. It is a genuine Chinese boat, and that is not to be seen anywhere but in China; so I must describe it to you as well as I can. Suppose yourself to be looking at a *wooden swan*, about twenty-three feet long by ten feet wide, with a little cabin six feet by four, standing about two feet above the back, which has been made even and boarded

over; and if, instead of the long neck, you put a pair of eyes on the breast, and paint the whole blue, you will have a good idea of the *cut* of my boat. Add to this, one tall mast, and one short one at the head, with square sails made of bamboo poles across, and a thin network of bamboo slips, lined with bamboo leaves, with the necessary ropes and oars, and anchor and rudder, and we are fully rigged. A strange cut and rig you will think it, and some wise youth will say, 'She has too much breadth of beam for her length; and if she's round in the bottom, like the body of a swan, she won't take hold of the water;' but that is just what the Chinese wish their boats not to do: instead of making their boats to go *through* the water, and giving them the form of a fish, as in England, they make them to skim *over* the water, and give them the form of a water-fowl. In this they are right; and I think there are few boats in England that could keep up with the Amoy boats; with a fair wind and tide, I have often gone from six to seven miles in half an hour.

"It was on a beautiful morning in September that I set out on my excursion, with two Chinese evangelists, and five or six others as servants or boatmen. There were many other boats on the water, some going in one direction, some in another; and as we sailed through the fine harbour, we saw vessels of all kinds, from the British 'brig-of-war' to the clumsy junks, with their shapeless and unwieldy hulks, and boats from all the towns and villages around Amoy. Each district having a form of its own, we could tell the place from which they came, and form an opinion of the cargo of each, by knowing the

commodity for which the district is famous. There were large junks with spices from Singapore, and others with the hardy productions of the north. Those long boats, covered with mats, are from Chang-chow, laden with silks or sugar; and those with cabins bring fruit, and vegetables, and rice from Pechuia, or Chiòh-bey. But we have not time to notice all; we can only glance at the hundreds as we pass, and admire the busy appearance of the whole, and the gay colours of their flags, of every shape and hue. The wind was against us, but as it cooled the air, and the tide favoured us, we did not mind. Everything looked beautiful and cheerful; and as we glided on, passing many a boat more gaily painted than ours, but not so good at sailing, all seemed in good spirits, and the boatmen, who were all Christians, began to sing their Chinese hymns, in which we all heartily joined.

"After a few hours' sailing, we anchored at the mouth of the river, and left the boat to come up at full tide; while the evangelists and I went on to visit one or two of the villages.

"You cannot well understand the effect the first arrival of a foreigner in one of the towns of China produces. The excitement caused by a lord-mayor's show in London, or the arrival of a menagerie in a country town in England, is nothing to it; and as the oldest inhabitants of this district had never seen or even heard of a foreigner being in these parts, the whole population was in commotion. As I passed along the road, the labourers in the field stood still and stared, and those who had the presence of mind shouted to their companions in the adjoining field to come

and look, while some of the boys ran before to bear the news to the village, and, on reaching it, I found that every house had turned out its occupants; old and young were standing ready to receive our company; every kind of occupation and amusement was at an end, and had been relinquished so suddenly, that everything stood where it just happened to be when the strange news arrived. The blacksmith had left the red-hot iron to cool on the anvil, the shoemaker's awl was sticking in the old shoe he was patching, old matrons had risen up from the spinning-wheel, and boys had scarcely time to snatch up the toys they were playing with, even the beggar stood with the *rice-bowl* in his hand, asking no alms. And it was long before any of them returned to their occupations; it was an idle time to the old, and a holiday to the young. . . . It is very curious to hear, in these distant heathen places, the great truths of the gospel passing from mouth to mouth, as you go along the streets, and it is pleasant to hear the children using the name of Jesus, even when they know but little of what Jesus did. After we had been some time there, I often heard the boys calling out in their own language, 'Jesus Christ is God,' or 'Jesus is God,' or 'Siong Te T'hian lang'—'God loves men.'"

When Dr. Young reached Amoy in March, 1850, he found two bands of labourers already on the field:—Messrs. Stronach and Young of the London Society, and Messrs. Talmage and Doty of the American Board of Missions. Both of them had hopefully broken ground, and numbered at this time between them twenty adult converts, of whom eight belonged to the former, and

twelve to the latter. Into hearty sympathy and co-operation with these brethren Dr. Young at once entered, whilst devoting himself specially to that department of the work which more peculiarly belonged to him. He was soon at the head of two native schools numbering together thirty children, who rapidly grew to eighty, and "over some of whom he was in due time permitted to rejoice as Christians," besides a hospital for the sick, in which while he ministered to the diseases of the body, two native evangelists pointed the way to the Divine Physician of souls. He was especially useful in curing the disease of opium-smoking, by the introduction of a medicine which soothed the imperious craving for the noxious drug, and thus rendered the effort to break off the habit more easy. By means of this treatment many permanent cures were effected, and the demand for the medicine was soon so great as to become a self-supporting business. Into the work thus hopefully begun Mr. Burns at once threw himself with characteristic energy, locating himself in the midst of the native population in an upper chamber above the school, and commencing the study of the Amoy dialect with the sound of Chinese voices perpetually in his ears. A few days afterwards he gives his first impressions of the place and of the work in a letter to his mother:—

Amoy, July 25th, 1851.—MY DEAR MOTHER,—As you see from the date I am now at Amoy, having left Canton only a few days after I last wrote you, and having been here already ten days. My expectations of getting the house I had in view at Canton were completely disappointed, and my way seemed hedged up to come here. I embarked accordingly at Whampoa in the English barque *Herald* for Amoy on the

evening of June 26th, and after spending the Sabbath and Monday at Hong-Kong by the way, we reached here on the forenoon of July 5th. The passage was a delightful one, and very refreshing to the bodily frame after sixteen months in Canton. The days I spent in Hong-Kong were pleasant. I had two opportunities of preaching in Chinese, and stayed with my old friend Dr. Hirschberg. . . . I have found a very kind Christian welcome among the missionary brethren, English and American, here, and my expectations are more than exceeded in all I have seen as yet of Amoy as a place and as a missionary station. I stayed for three nights with Mr. and Mrs. Stronach of the London Missionary Society, members of old in the Albany Street Congregational Church, Edinburgh; and I am now very much to my mind lodged in the middle of the Chinese population, in a little room connected with the school which was made over to Dr. Young by an American missionary on his removal here a year ago. Thus settled down amid Chinese voices, and with a Christian native servant (who prays with me; I cannot yet pray with him in his own dialect), and a Chinese teacher who comes daily, I am endeavouring to exchange my Canton for the Amoy Chinese. To speak this new dialect publicly and well may require a good deal of time; but even already I can make myself easily understood about common things, and am able to follow a good deal of what I hear in Chinese preaching. Dr. and Mrs. Young are well, and seem to be getting on well, through the divine blessing and guidance. I feel it a great privilege to be connected with him as well as with the other missionary brethren here, who all go on in much harmony, and not without tokens of divine encouragement. The people here present a striking contrast to the people of Canton in their feelings and deportment towards foreigners. Here all is quiet and friendly, and although there is here also a great apathy on the subject of the gospel, yet a good many seem to listen with attention, and the missionaries have inquirers who come to be taught. I was preaching last Sabbath-day (in

English of course) from the words: 'Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold' (Matthew xxiv.); and, alas! I felt they were solemnly applicable to my own state of heart. Unless the Lord the Spirit continually uphold and quicken, oh! how benumbing is daily contact with heathenism! But the Lord is faithful, and has promised to be 'as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' May you and all God's professing people in a land more favoured, but, alas! also more guilty, experience much of the Lord's own presence, power, and blessing, and when the enemy comes in as a flood, may the Spirit of the Lord—yea, it is said, 'the Spirit of the Lord *shall*—lift up a standard against him.'"

His allusion here, as well as often in other letters, to the "benumbing influence of continual contact with heathenism," and the danger generally of losing the keen edge and high tone of practical godliness while dwelling in a land in which all the usual means and incentives of the spiritual life are in so great a measure withdrawn, is at once touching and instructive, and suggests to us an aspect of the missionary life which most of us at home but little think of. We are apt to regard the Christian missionary as, by the very act of his consecration to so sublime a vocation, at once raised to a region of exalted faith and fervour far above us, in which all the ordinary perils to the life of the soul are unknown. The idea of a carnal, formal, perfunctory, unspiritual, and commonplace missionary, seems to us almost a contradiction in terms. We think naturally of those brave athletes of the Cross very much as ordinary Christians in early days thought of the ascetic recluses of the desert, as men by the very nature of their calling pre-eminently devoted in

heart to God, and almost as a matter of course and *ipso facto*, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." No mistake, I believe, can be more grievous. The whole history of missionary life and labour abundantly shows how possible it is to lose the life of faith, even while seeking the propagation of the faith; to leave house and home and kindred for Christ's sake and the gospel's, and yet in a heathen land to breathe little either of the love of Christ or the grace of the gospel. Most of us little think how hard a thing it must be for a solitary wanderer in such a land as China, to maintain the life of Christian godliness in the very atmosphere and element of heathenism—without a Sabbath; without Christian fellowship or brotherhood; without a Christian face to look into or a Christian hand to grasp; with an utter disbelief of all Christian truths, and of everything belonging to a higher world, looking out from the eyes of all around him; with nothing left to feed the inner springs of the soul, but his Bible, his closet (if indeed he can command a closet), and his God. The brightest lamp will burn dim in an impure and rarified atmosphere. It is only by a special miracle that the children of Israel can thrive and be of fair countenance on the pulse and water of Babylon. The palm-tree of the desert "knoweth not when heat cometh," but it is because its roots are watered by hidden springs far under ground. We can understand then how it was that the subject of this memoir, while wandering amid the heathen villages on the mainland, so intensely longed for a Sabbath at Hong-Kong, and so continually cast himself on the succour of his brethren's prayers, not only for the success of his

labours, but for the very life of his own soul. "The wilderness and the solitary place" were indeed often made glad for him, and the parched ground became as "a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water;" but he felt that it was so, and could only be so, by a special miracle of grace.

The effort "to exchange the Canton for the Amoy Chinese," did not prove so arduous a one as he had probably expected. Embued as he now was with the spirit and fundamental principles of the language, the transition from one form of it to another became to him comparatively natural and easy. While, as we have seen, he was from the first able to make himself understood on common matters, and to comprehend a good deal of what he heard in the public worship of God, its unaccustomed form soon became sufficiently familiar to him to admit of his himself using it in public discourse. By the beginning of the next year we find him again at his congenial work of spreading the good news of the kingdom among the towns and villages around, where the name of Christ had not yet been named: of date February 7, 1852, he writes in his journal:—

"I am now engaged a good deal in the work of spreading the gospel among this people, being in the gracious arrangements of God's providence favoured with the co-operation of professing Christians, both in-doors and in the open air. One of these baptized since I came here by the American missionaries aids me regularly, and others from time to time. We have meetings in the chapel of Tai-Hang, where Dr. Young resides, but get greater numbers in the open air when giving addresses in the open

places of the city. During this week I also went to the neighbouring country (on the island) among the villages, spending a night in one of these in the house of my servant, and preaching the word with my companions T. and K. in six different villages. . . . The work increases in interest and hopefulness. 'Thy kingdom come!'"

Again on March 6th he writes:—

"On Tuesday the 24th February I again set out to visit some villages on the island of Amoy, and returned in much mercy on Tuesday the 2d, being absent seven nights. . . . The day we set out was the 5th of the first Chinese month, and as at this season the villages are full of people who have not yet returned to their usual employments, we had large audiences everywhere. We generally addressed five or six meetings in the course of the day, and in all must have made known something of the truth to at least two or three thousand people. . . . The people were everywhere friendly and attentive. We distributed a large number of tracts and hand-bill copies of the ten commandments. May the seed of the Word sown spring and bear fruit to the glory of God and the salvation of souls!"

In his next excursion (March 16th) he crossed over to the mainland directly opposite Amoy; and in the course of seven days made a circuit of thirty villages, sowing everywhere plenteously the precious seed. Everywhere they were most kindly welcomed, everywhere met with numerous, willing, and often attentive audiences, were everywhere hospitably entertained by the people free of charge; and such was the missionary's sense of the

promising aspect of the field, and of the urgent need of additional labourers to reap the ripening harvest, that he gave a whole year's salary to the funds of the Committee to hasten on the work.[1] "Surely," said the convener in giving in the next report, "that field is ripe unto harvest, when the reaper sends home his own wages to fetch out another labourer!"

The next year his expedition took a wider range, including the great city of Chang-chow, already referred to as the chief centre of population in this part of the province.

"*Amoy, May 16th*, 1853.—Last month I had the privilege of paying a visit to Chang-chow-foo, a large city in this neighbourhood, at the distance of about forty English miles. We left Amoy on the morning of April 13, and returned here on the 26th, being absent about a fortnight, nine days of which were spent at Chang-chow, preaching to large and very interesting audiences both inside and outside the city. A week or two before our going, two native Christians, of the American Mission here, had visited Chang-chow, and preached to crowds for a number of days with much encouragement; and as they were purposing to go again, at the earnest desire especially of one of them, it was arranged that I should also go, although there was some reason to fear that, unless God should graciously open our way, there might be some unwillingness on the part of the authorities to allow a foreigner to pay more than a brief visit, or to preach at large to the people. To avoid difficulty as far as possible, it was arranged that we should live on the river, in the boat which carried us there, going on shore only to preach. On our arrival we immediately went on shore, and being at once surrounded by many people, we had a fine opportunity, within a few steps of our

[1] £250.

boat, of preaching the Word of Life fully and without hindrance. We continued thus to preach on the bank of the river for three days, going upwards from our boat in the morning, and downwards in the afternoon, and addressing large companies for three or four hours at a time, until we had exhausted all the suitable stations near the river. We then went inwards, but still outside the walls, and at the very first station at which we preached, a man came forward and pressed us to go further on, and preach again opposite his house. This man the following morning came and was with us at worship in our boat; and when it began to rain, and our boat was more uncomfortable, the same individual opened his house to us, and here we stayed (making the man a small remuneration) for five days; and going on from this as our head-quarters, still inwards, we enjoyed the fullest liberty, both within and without the city, of preaching to large and very much engaged audiences. I do not think, upon the whole, that I have spent so interesting a season, or enjoyed so fine an opportunity of preaching the Word of Life since I came to China, as during these nine days. The people were everywhere urgent in requesting that a place might be opened for the regular preaching of the gospel among them; and I am glad to say that the American Mission here have already sent two of the members of the native church to open an out-station in this important and very promising locality. Since our return here there have also three individuals come here at their own expense, to inquire further into the nature of the gospel. The native Christians with me were the same with whom I went last year in making some visits to the neighbourhood; and I have pleasure in adding, that they seem to be moved by love to the Saviour, and to the souls of their fellow-countrymen, in giving themselves to this work."

In a private letter of the same date, after referring more briefly to the above particulars, he adds, "We had all" (himself and three Chinese evangelists) "full work; for

our meetings (of course in the open air) generally lasted three or four hours, becoming the longer the more interesting. You would have rejoiced could you have seen me the last two evenings of our stay addressing a large and attentive audience until the moon was up (it generally fell to me to speak last); I felt thankful, indeed, in such circumstances that it was my privilege to be sent to China to preach Christ crucified as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. The time at which we were thus engaged was just during the meeting of the English Synod, and we may believe that in this the promise is fulfilled, 'While they are yet speaking, I will hear.'"

To any one who ever knew the writer of these lines, and who remembers how sparing he was of his words, and how jealously guarded in everything that related to himself, how little account too he made of mere surface appearances of interest and attention, it must be evident how much more is implied in such expressions as coming from him, than that which meets the eye. Evidently when he speaks thus his words must have been visibly telling on the hearts of his hearers, and he must have felt sure from the hushed silence and earnest look with which they listened to him, that a power was at work within them mightier than his words, and such as he had never known on Chinese soil before. At Canton he had complained that though the Chinese listened with a sort of listless attention to the gospel message, it never seemed to "take hold" of the Chinese mind. It was clearly taking hold of the Chinese mind now.

His power of access, indeed, to the confidence and regard of the Chinese people, and the influence he exerted over them, seems to have been something remarkable, and far beyond what one would ever gather from anything he ever said of himself. It was stated by one who knew him and his work in China well, that during the time of the insurgent movements in the Amoy district, "when no other European could venture out among the rebels, he was free to go where he liked: 'That's the man of the Book,' they would say, 'he must not be touched.' And once he had gone on one of his little tours, and as he did not come back for three weeks, his friends began to be quite afraid about him, when he appeared fat and well, having been fed up by a tribe he had got such access to, that they would scarcely let him away." Indeed the chief difficulty of his biographer arises from his rigid habit of understating, rather than amplifying everything that regarded himself, and confining himself not only to the real truth, but to the bare and naked truth. He had such a horror of the overcolouring of facts of which the advocates of missions have been sometimes accused, that he did not always give to his statements the true and adequate colours of life, so that justly to estimate his work, we must often look at it rather as it was judged of by others, than as it was regarded by himself.

The sequel of the history, as regards that brief day of grace for Chang-chow, is sad and tragical. In October 13th of the same year he writes:—

"When I wrote in May, I made allusion to an interesting missionary visit which I had paid, in company with members

of the native church here, to a large city in this neighbourhood—Chang-chow. I also mentioned that the American Mission here had the view of establishing permanently an out-station there, and were about to send two of their native assistants for that purpose. The sequel to this proposal, which is of a very affecting kind, and very different from what we had looked for, I have not yet mentioned to you. About the middle of May the native assistant, whom I have alluded to as co-operating with me here, went to Chang-chow along with another belonging to the same mission, and rented, as a place of meeting, the house of the man whom I alluded to in my May letter as having, in April, received us into his house, and taken some interest in our work. They had gone but two days when the local rebellion broke out in this neighbourhood, and had had in Chang-chow but one Sabbath's services when the insurgents reached that city. The man who had rented them his house took part with the insurgents, which led the native brethren to remove their lodgings to another place, that they might not be involved. When the insurgents had got possession of the city but two days, in consequence of their showing a disposition to rob and plunder, the populace on a sudden rose *en masse* upon them, and put nearly all who were within the city to an instant death! How little did we suppose when in April preaching the gospel in these streets, that in the course of a short month they were to be flowing with human blood! At the time of this awful massacre both the native brethren from Amoy were within the city; and as being strangers, from the same part of the country as the insurgents, they were in imminent danger of being reckoned as belonging to them, and sharing in their dreadful end. The one who is now here early saw his danger, and with difficulty made his escape, by dropping from the city walls. The other, a native of Canton province, was more fearless, being in company with some friends engaged in business in Chang-chow. He also did escape at this time, although not without much danger; but

having delayed to leave the city, as his companion wished him, and return to Amoy, he was the following morning, on a sudden, arrested by a band of the populace, and, despite all his friends could do, was dragged before the mandarin, and instantly beheaded! His companion having separated from him the day before this occurred, and with great difficulty made his way home to Amoy, it was several weeks before we heard of the affecting event. Nor was this all,—the man who had rented them his house, having openly joined the insurgents, was seized in the street by the populace, and publicly beheaded! This was the melancholy end of one who, though not a man of good character among his countrymen, had a few weeks before welcomed us in our mission, joined us in all our services, and seemed to have, at least, the joy of a stony-ground hearer, if nothing more. Since that time the people of Chang-chow city have been engaged in almost constant fighting with the insurgent party; and although the insurgents have not been able again to recover the city, yet to the present hour it is so shut up, that almost no communication can be carried on between it and Amoy. The sufferings of its inhabitants have been, and still are, very great. A native of the city who had become interested in the gospel message, and who, as well as other two, came down to Amoy in April on purpose to hear it more fully, was also in great peril of being seized and put to death, like the others. His house was surrounded by armed men, and he only made his escape by getting through the roof, and running along the tops of the houses; with difficulty, after some weeks of wandering, he got here, and has remained under this roof since; it being still unsafe for him to return home."

But the fire thus kindled at Chang-chow was never wholly extinguished. Fanned by the occasional visits of other missionaries, and by the fostering care of the neighbouring native church of Chióh-bey in connection with the American Board, it still burned on with more or

less of vitality and fervour through all the changes of an outwardly checkered and disastrous history. Persecution came, but only braced and purified the more the faith of the little flock. The house in which they were assembled was more than once assaulted by ruffians, the furniture broken, and the roof, door, and windows almost riddled with stones; yet the constancy of the believers remained unshaken, and the number of inquirers increased. At length "in January, 1862, Mr. Douglas visited the city in company with one of the American brethren, and had the privilege of baptizing six men, the first-fruits of this long and perilous sowing time of more than eight years, and soon after four more were baptized."[1] The last glimpse we have of Chang-chow is a singularly sad one. First taken by the Nanking rebels towards the close of 1864, and then retaken by the Imperial forces early in the next year, it suffered so terribly from the destructive violence of both, as to be reduced to a scene of utter desolation. "I remained," says one of the missionaries, who visited it soon after its recapture, "within the walls for three hours, and walked through a great part of the city. It is one mass of ruins, and I know it is within the mark for me to say that not ten houses out of a hundred are left standing. The large suburbs outside the west and south gates are entirely destroyed. There were a few persons inside attempting to clear away the rubbish; but, alas! how different from the streams and crowds of people I once had to jostle my way through! I never saw a sacked city

[1] *Narrative of the Mission to China*, &c., by D. Matheson, Esq., pp. 46, 47.

before, and I trust I may never see another. No human being can give you an idea of the harrowing sight. Here and there we would come upon a woman sitting weeping over the ruins of what was once her home,—weeping bitterly. On asking one or two such persons some questions, we would find that husband, sons, all were gone, and she alone left to mourn the bitter loss. We entered the once famed Chang-chow with a sad heart, and left it with a sadder."

But there still linger amongst the ruins the remnants of a people whose hopes are not bound up with the wreck of their earthly homes, but who "look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Of date March 12th, 1853, and exactly a month before his visit to Chang-chow, I find the following brief entry in his journal, in reference to a department of work of a very different kind, but which had been occupying much of his time and thoughts for several months past:—

"In the great mercy and by the gracious and constant aid of the Lord and Saviour I was enabled on the 10th to complete the last revised copy of Bunyan's *Pilgrim* (1st part) in Chinese, which has occupied us from June 1st, 1852, until now, with the exception of a month at the end of last summer, when through feverish sickness I was obliged to lay it aside. The whole has been looked over by Messrs. Doty and A. Stronach with their teachers, and the work has been benefited by a number of their suggestions. *One hour* after finishing the last sheet in the form in which it will be printed, I received from Shanghai a copy of the *Pilgrim* in Chinese, printed two years ago

by Mr. Muirhead of the London Society, chiefly for the use of pupils. It is not, however, a continuous translation of the whole." This work was to him in a very eminent degree a labour of love. The admiration and love of early years grew upon him, as the studious care of a translator brought him into closer contact with the thoughts and more intimate sympathy with the spirit of the wondrous dreamer. It was a subject of continual interest to watch the effect of the mystic allegory on another mind, and especially on a Chinese mind. One graphic incident of this kind I remember his telling me a year or two afterwards. When occupied with the inimitable portraiture of Ignorance, the Chinese teacher, who was working with him, and who was then only half a Christian, was greatly taken with the flippant and copious talker, whose fluent tongue and knowledge of all subjects, physical and metaphysical, human and divine, positively enchanted him, and drew forth audible expressions of admiration and delight as he proceeded with his task; and it was only when the character had fully developed itself and the glittering tinsel fell off from the base metal beneath, that noisy approbation gave place to a silent thoughtfulness which showed that the master had achieved his object. He was pleased also to mark how in several instances the imagery of the dream fell singularly in with some of the familiar incidents of Chinese life, as in the inscriptions set up by the wayside to commemorate important events, and admonish wayfarers. The book has been since appropriately embellished with a series of very spirited illustrations by Mr. Adams, a Scottish artist, who has happily

succeeded in adapting the incidents of the story to the characteristic physiognomy and costume of Chinese life.

Another task of a similar kind in which he was engaged about this time, was the editing of a collection of hymns for Chinese worship, which from the first became a great favourite, especially with the children, and has since appeared in improved and enlarged editions. During his visit to this country two years afterwards he used to talk with delight of the ardour with which the young and fervent converts used to recite or sing these hymns, especially a series of twelve didactic and practical rhymes composed by one of the London missionaries, and which, like the songs of the Reformation, had been much blessed in deepening in many hearts the lines of Christian doctrine and duty. One of these in particular I distinctly recal, with the very cadence of the tune to which he used to sing it to us in the characteristic style of his Chinese children in the faith:—

1.

Strait is the gate, and rough the way
That leads to heaven and endless day;
Few enter in, and very few
Their journey to the end pursue.

2.

For we with sin's desires must fight,
Mouth, ears, and eyes must guard aright,
In all we do must act by rule,
Rein in the heart nor play the fool.

3.

We must not covet sordid pelf,
Nor injure men to profit self,
Must careful be to speak the truth,
And far must flee from lusts of youth.

4.

We must not cast an envious eye
On those whose earthly place is high,
Nor look with proud and scornful thought
On those who fill the meanest lot.

5.

This heart of pride must be laid low,
We must love men, though hate they show;
Serve God, though to our worldly loss,
Believe in Christ, and bear his Cross.

6.

Alas! weak men, devoid of grace,
How can we run this holy race?
Jesus, from heaven Thy Spirit send
To guide and help us to the end![1]

Such strains as these, pealing in clear and strong, though slightly plaintive notes,[2] from the open verandah or housetop, would sometimes, as he told us, meet his ear, and be his first greeting as he returned at eventide from some distant field of labour.

[1] Words translated from the Chinese by W. C. Burns, and amended by Rev. J. D. Burns of Hampstead, 1855.

[2] The tendency of the Chinese to leave out all semitones imparts a character quite peculiar to the manner of rendering our familiar tunes.

CHAPTER XVII

1854.

FIRST-FRUITS.

HITHERTO the abundant and patient labours which we have been recording had been rewarded only by hopeful appearances and fair promise, but the missionary was soon to witness greater things than these. On the 18th of January, 1854, Mr. Johnston, shortly after his arrival, wrote: "God has tried the faith and patience of our brethren in denying them the privilege of gathering fruit in this life as yet, and at present we cannot even speak of the blossoms and buddings of the spiritual vintage." Most singularly it happened that at the very time when these words were written events were in progress in a village not twenty miles distant which rendered them no longer true, and which may be said to have opened a new era in the history of the mission. Mr. Burns left Amoy on the 9th January on another preaching tour, taking with him as usual as his companions and assistants two native evangelists, C.-C. and T.-C. The former had been with him before in almost all his evangelistic journeys since he came to Amoy, and was a man in some respects remarkable. He had belonged in the days of his heathen darkness to the class, so numerous

in China, of fortune-tellers, and possessed in large measure the fortune-teller's fluency of speech, and readiness of resource. Attracted by the preaching of the gospel at the American Chapel, he had had his heart touched by the simple home question of a missionary, "Are you well? Is your heart at peace?" and sought and found the peace of God. Rejoicing in that pearl of great price himself, it was his delight henceforth to proclaim and commend it to others, and to this end he freely devoted those peculiar gifts which he had formerly employed in the pursuit of unlawful gain. He was quick, buoyant, nimble, fertile in argument, anecdote, and happy illustration, ever prompt for action, and ready with the fit word at the fitting time. The other, a schoolmaster, had been sorely puzzled to understand how the Christian preachers should spend their days telling those gospel stories to the people, without ever asking for money or apparently seeking any earthly reward. He had often enough listened at the corners of the streets to the professional story-tellers of his own country, and well remembered how adroitly they used to stop at the most thrilling part of the tale, and keep the expectant crowd in suspense until they had been well paid to tell the rest. He resolved in his heart to get to the bottom of the matter. He listened with awakened interest to the Word of Life, found out the great secret, and became a teller of the good news of grace himself.

The course of the missionary band lay first across the wide estuary which is closed in by Amoy and its companion group of islands, amid scenery which the mission-

aries describe as remarkably resembling the Frith of Clyde, with "its beautiful variety of hill and island and far reaches of the sea, at one moment lost sight of and again seen stretching far round promontory, creek, and bay"—then, for some eight or ten miles further along the course of a fine winding river. Their first halting-place was at a market-town on its banks of about 3000 inhabitants, called Pechuia (White-water Camp), and the commercial centre of a considerable district, full of agricultural villages, where their course was arrested in a manner to them as unexpected as it was delightful. "Here," says Mr. Doty of the American Mission, "they intended to begin working, expecting, after a few days at longest, to go forward, making known the gospel message as they might have opportunity, and just where the Master might providentially lead them. But for two months continuously the brethren were shut up to this one place and the nearest villages, in holding forth day and night the Word of Life. Almost at the very first declaration of the truth, some persons were interested, and became earnest inquirers. From that time to the present the work has been gradually gaining in importance. Mr. Burns has rented a small building, the upper floor for his dwelling, while the lower is a preaching place. This is visited by many persons, who come in on market-days from all the surrounding region for purposes of trade. There are twelve such days in each month. Public worship is held on the Sabbath and every evening, and is attended by a goodly number of apparently interested listeners. Of a few, hope is indulged that they have really passed from death unto

life. Numbers have renounced their idols. Some have burned and destroyed them. Others have given them to the brethren to be thus dealt with. Two of our native brethren are constantly employed in connection with Mr. Burns.

"In March, Mr. Burns and two brethren made a tour of some weeks further in the interior, visiting some places to which they had been earnestly invited by persons who had visited them at Pechuia. While they were absent, two other native brethren continued the labours at the first place. At this time it was my privilege to make a short visit there. I found such an awakened interest and spirit of inquiry as I had never before met with among Chinese. It did seem as if the Holy Spirit was at work. The most marked cases are of young men of some education, and endowed with considerable zeal and energy. These are very active in efforts to awaken the attention of others. From the first there have been opposers of the movement, and recently there has been manifested a disposition to annoy and disturb the public worship. There are firm idolaters there, and the spirit of persecution is not wanting."

Mr. Burns' own statement is to the same effect, though couched, as his manner was, in scrupulously guarded and naked terms, and while giving some additional details, traces briefly the further progress of the work. "It is exactly four months," he writes, May 8th, 1854, "since I first set out this season on a missionary tour; and you are already aware that God so remarkably opened the door in the place to which we first went, that we found it

our clear duty to remain at that place as our head-quarters for a longer period than we had intended—visiting the numerous villages and market-towns within our reach, while we carried on regular services at Pechuia, our central station. The work there was so interesting that we felt it could not be abandoned, but as we were anxious to extend our efforts to one or two central positions farther inland, it was necessary that other agents should take our place in order to leave us free to go forward. Accordingly, when, two months ago, I returned from Amoy to Pechuia, an addition was made to the number of native assistants, and leaving two of these to occupy Pechuia, I proceeded on the 9th of March farther inland, in company with the two native Christian companions with whom I had originally set out on the 9th of January from Amoy. The place to which we first went is a market-town, somewhat smaller than Pechuia, named Bay-pay (Horse-flat), and distant from the former place, across the hills, about seven English miles. To this place we had been invited by several persons, and here we remained (well-lodged and free of rent) for eleven days, in the course of which we visited and preached at almost all the villages in the neighbourhood, from thirty to fifty in number. We were almost everywhere favourably received, and our message listened to with attention, although there were no cases, as at Pechuia, of persons coming out and declaring themselves on the side of the gospel. While at Bay-pay, we heard it reported that at Pechuia one family had publicly destroyed their idols and ancestral tablets (the latter the dearest objects of Chinese idolatry), and that another man had closed his

shop on the Lord's-day, refusing admittance to a person who wished to trade with him. Both of these reports, so interesting to us, turned out to be true.

"From Bay-pay we proceeded four or five English miles farther on to Poolamkio (South-bank Bridge). Here we were on the sea-coast, I suppose about fifteen miles south of the entrance to Amoy harbour. We were well received here also, and would have gladly remained for a week or two, proceeding still farther south, as we were invited to do, but our books, &c., were becoming few, and our lodging—which would have been very comfortable had we had sole possession of it—being partly occupied by opium-smokers and gamblers, we resolved, after a stay of only four days, on returning to Pechuia. On arriving, we found to our delight that the work there had made decided progress in our absence. The two native Christians (members of the American Mission Church at Amoy) whom we had left in charge, seem to have been much aided in teaching the people. The preaching room had been crowded every night to a late hour by from forty to sixty persons, and those who had from the beginning shown an attachment to the truth had evidently advanced in knowledge and earnestness of spirit, and resolved to obey the gospel at the risk of much reproach and opposition. In our absence the station had also had the benefit of a short visit from Mr. Doty of the American Mission. After returning from our inland tour, we continued our meetings at Pechuia with much encouragement, several members of the native church in Amoy having successively come out of their own accord to aid in the work. During

the last two or three weeks, however, the aspect of things at Pechuia has been considerably changed; for while those on the side of the gospel seem to go on in a way that fills our hearts with thankfulness, and our mouths with praise, a disposition has been shown on the part of others to interrupt our meetings, which has obliged us at night to hold them upstairs, and more privately. The state of the weather also at this rainy season has prevented us from doing so much as before among adjacent villages. When I left Pechuia last Monday, it seemed that, including young and old, there might be about twenty persons who have declared themselves on the side of the gospel, but some of these are children, and two or three are women whom we have not seen—mothers who have received the truth from their sons or husbands. Among the number of those who are attached to the gospel are two whole families of six members each. The eldest son in one of these families, a promising youth of twenty, early showed much decision, having, on the birth-day of '*the god of the furnace*,' taken his god and put it in the fire. The idol having been but in part consumed, his mother discovered among the ashes a part of its head, and father and mother together beat their son severely; but some of the other Pechuia inquirers having gone to comfort the young man, and reason with his parents, their views underwent so sudden and entire a change, that in a day or two afterwards they, with their four sons, brought out all their idols and ancestral tablets and publicly destroyed them in the view of the people. The father I have two or three times met with, and he seems, along with his

four sons (an interesting set of boys), to be in a promising state of mind. The other family is that of a respectable cloth-dealer, whose shop is in the same street with our lodging. This family has passed through remarkable trials, which seem to have prepared them for receiving the gospel on its first announcement, they having twice lost all their property by robbers; and on the second of these occasions having had their house burned, to cover the robbers' retreat—when the whole family were obliged to leap from an upper story, and yet escaped unhurt! They are a very interesting family, and have in one point shown more decision than I have before seen in China, having (while yet only inquirers) shut their shop on the last eight Sabbaths, even although two of these Sabbaths were market-days. The family adjoining our house is literally divided—two against three, and three against two. The elder brother and his wife oppose,—they live by making paper images used in idolatrous processions, for burning to the dead, &c.; the mother, second son, with the youngest, who is a mere boy, are on the side of the gospel. The second son formerly made images with his elder brother, but has now given up his trade, and has begun a general business in one half of the shop which they have in common. It is curious thus to notice that on the Lord's-day the younger brother's side of the shop is closed, while the elder brother's side remains open! This young man, when we were absent farther inland, went down to Amoy with the desire of being admitted into the visible church; and though he has not yet been baptized, the American missionaries, who examined him,

were astonished and delighted by the evidence which he gave them of knowledge, repentance, and faith; and would have admitted him a month ago, along with ten others (Amoy people), had it not been that my two native companions, returning the day before to Amoy, urged the expediency of delay."

"Yesterday we had a good day here. It was one of the market-days (there are twelve such every Chinese month), and the people came in, as usual, in numbers to hear. Most of those interested in the truth were also present. The work of preaching all devolved on myself, and I felt supported more than usually. In the afternoon I went alone to visit a village in the neighbourhood: and in my absence a number of the inquirers, &c., met here for worship of their own accord. When I returned, they were joyfully engaged in singing hymns, studying the Scriptures, &c., and continued so during most of the evening. I have not witnessed the same state of things in China before. It is said among the people that we have some mode of enchanting those who come to us. In no other way can the blind world account for the impression made on some of those who are receiving the truth."

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." There was everywhere the stir and glad excitement of a busy harvest-field. There were all the signs of the coming of the kingdom of God after the true model of apostolic times; the general and wide-spread interest, individual decision and self-sacrifice, the division of families, the separation of brother from brother for Christ's sake and the gospel's, the test of persecution and the fierce opposi-

tion of adversaries around the wide and effectual door, the joy of first love, and the spontaneous spread of the sacred influence from village to village, and from heart to heart. Well might Mr. Burns write, in regard to these encouraging tokens, in words which mean much as coming from him:—"What I see here makes me call to mind former days of the Lord's power in my native land. In *my own* circle of observation I have hardly seen so promising an appearance of the coming of God's kingdom since I came to China. . . . You will see from what I have stated that there is indeed much to encourage prayer and effort in behalf of this benighted people; and that we have also cause for admiring thankfulness to our covenant God and Saviour. In my own experience the Lord's goodness is so great and unceasing, that while friends in Scotland may look upon me as an exile, I feel as much at home here as I would wish to do on this side of the Jordan."

The cases of some of the individual converts who were the first-fruits of this gospel harvest are briefly referred to by Mr. Burns in one of the letters just quoted; but one or two additional particulars may be given from the letters of other missionaries:—

"Of Som-a, the youngest child of the family of the cloth-merchant above referred to, as having all together embraced the gospel, the following interesting incident is related. When the old father was going to Amoy as a candidate for baptism, Som-a asked to be allowed to accompany him for the same purpose. He was told he was too young, and that he might fall back if he made a profession when he was only a little boy. To this he

made the touching reply, 'Jesus has promised to carry the lambs in his arms. As I am only a little boy it will be easier for Jesus to carry me.' No further words were needed; Som-a accompanied his father, and was soon afterwards baptized. Mr. Johnston, who relates this story, adds that the mother, He-Se, received all her Christian instruction from the male members of the family, as she dared not attend the public preaching, but her sons repeated to her much of what they heard, and she was the first female baptized in Pechuia.

"Another mother said she, too, wished to be a member of the religion of Jesus, because it had made such a wonderful change in her son. 'It must be a good thing,' she said, 'to be connected with such a person as Jesus.'

A still more interesting case is that of Si-boo, the second son of the divided family mentioned above, who has since gone to labour as an evangelist among his own countrymen at Singapore:—"On Mr. Burns' first visit to Pechuia, he found amongst the foremost and most interesting of his hearers, a youth of about eighteen or twenty, called Si-boo. Of stature rather under the average of his countrymen, with an eye and countenance more open than usual, and a free and confiding manner, he soon attracted the attention of our missionary. His position in life was above the class of common mechanics, and his education rather good for his position. His occupation was to make small paper images for the houses of his idolatrous countrymen, of every variety of style and workmanship, some plain and cheap, and some of the most elaborate and costly description.

an exuberant playfulness, rather opposed to the stricter notions and more staid manner of some of his friends, was generally expended in committing to memory some verse of Scripture or favourite hymn, the latter being generally sung along with, or after the process of committal, so frequently, that many beside himself had the privilege of hearing both hymn and tunes if they were so disposed.

"It was this diligent study and Christian consistency of character, during these years of his profession of the faith, and that intelligent acquaintance with the system of divine truth, which marked out Si-boo for the interesting mission on which he has been since sent, while his native energy and independence would both incline and enable him to undertake a work of enterprise and difficulty."

It will have been noticed that the religious movement we are now describing was not confined to Pechuia, but extended more or less over the whole district, with its scattered villages, of which it forms the centre. At Bay-pay especially, the work, if less striking in its manifestations at the outset, was in the end even more steady and progressive. It became speedily the seat of a fervent and prosperous church, which has continued to this day to grow in numbers, in zeal, and in fruitfulness. Tried in a more than usual degree by the blasts of persecution, it has nobly stood the test, and proved itself to be one of those trees of God's planting, "which shaking fastens more." It was constituted into a regular Christian community almost as early as its elder sister at Pechuia, and numbered in 1865 on its communion roll more than twice as many

members. It was in reference to this favoured field of labour that one of the missionaries afterwards wrote, in returning from the delightful work of instructing inquirers and examining candidates for baptism:—"After winding about among the hills, and on emerging from a narrow rocky path, the whole rich plain in which Pechuia stands burst at once upon our view. About two months before, in returning, the labourers were just beginning to let in the irrigating waters and to break up the hardened soil; but now it was all covered with the verdure of the growing rice—a beautiful emblem of the spiritual harvest which the Lord was so rapidly gathering by our hands."[1]

Meanwhile at Amoy also the spiritual work of the missionaries grew sensibly in interest and fruitfulness. It seemed as if the mother church there had been moved to jealousy by the fervour and love of her own daughters in the faith. The earnest attention of hearers at all the chapels deepened, and inquirers multiplied. The arrival of one and another too from distant stations, who had travelled all the way in search of the priceless pearl, must have chid the tardy steps of those who had heard the divine call before them, but were halting between two opinions:

"We have great reason," writes Mr. Doty, "for thankful praise to the God of grace for the tokens of his favour that we are enjoying in our work here. Knowing there were some persons waiting an opportunity to offer themselves as applicants for church-membership, some time in January we appointed a special meeting for the purpose. We were both surprised and cheered to find about thirty

[1] Letter of Rev. Carstairs Douglas.

persons of both sexes, and of ages varying from twenty years up to near seventy, convened. Though among this number were many whom we cannot regard as proper subjects for church-membership, yet most have manifested, and still do continue to manifest, an interest in their soul's salvation.

"We found that there was a spirit of inquiry and awakening, quite unknown to us as to its extent, among those who had been statedly hearing the word. From the time of that first meeting for conference and examination, we have felt it to be our duty to continue to hold similar services, and so to meet with those who wish instruction, or desire to be received to church-fellowship. A part of the time we have held the meeting once in two weeks, generally once a week, though in some instances twice. In these meetings we are usually engaged from three to four hours, during which time we may converse with or examine, as the case may be, three or four individuals in the most searching manner, both as to their experimental knowledge of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart, and their acquaintance with Christian doctrine. This brings us into the closest personal contact with their minds, and enables us to give instruction, to correct misconceptions of truth, guide the inquiring, encourage, warn, and exhort, so as to meet the difficulties of each individual, and the profit of all. Of those applying, after several examinations, ten were admitted to baptism on the last Sabbath of last month, March 26. Two of these are women, one aged sixty-eight years, the other forty-seven; while of the males, their ages range from twenty to sixty-

four years. Our meetings continue to be attended with unabated solemnity and interest, and by increasing numbers. Among those recently baptized, as well as among those asking to be numbered among God's professing people, there are several cases manifesting more clearly the work of the Spirit with power than anything we have heretofore seen among the Chinese. Our brethren of the London Society's Mission are sharing largely in this blessed visitation. They have recently received seventeen, nine of whom were women, to church-fellowship, and numbers more are asking for the same privilege."

It was amid exhilarating influences and prospects like these that Mr. Burns made a brief visit to this country during the summer and autumn of 1854. The occasion of his journey was a sad one. His valued colleague Dr. Young, had at the close of the previous year suffered a heavy affliction in the unexpected removal of an endeared partner, whose life had seemed alike invaluable to himself and to the cause for which he laboured; and though he seemed at first to rally from the blow, it soon appeared that he had received both in mind and body so severe a shock as to render a return to his native land for a season indispensable. It was necessary that some one should accompany him on the voyage, and it was decided after brief conference that Mr. Burns should undertake that duty. How tenderly he watched over his friend during what was to both a singularly trying journey, and how lovingly he cared for those dear to him after his early and sudden removal, it is not for me to tell; but it will be remembered in his behalf in the great day. Dr. Young

died at Musselburgh on the 11th of February, 1855, having laboured only for four years in the work to which he had devoted himself; but having accomplished much in little time. He will be ever remembered with honour, as one of the first pioneers and patient sowers in a field of toil, of which he was only beginning to reap the fruit when his Master summoned him away. Many in Scotland will remember the Chinese Christian nurse who accompanied him to Edinburgh in charge of his child, and who was one of the first-fruits of his faithful labours in China. She had been baptized the previous year along with her own son and fifteen others at Amoy. "She was, we believe, the first converted Chinese woman that had been in Scotland. She could not escape observation as she sat in the church-pew, with deep thought on her countenance, poring over the Chinese hymn-book, bound in black, which she held in her dark bony hand. A red rose, after the fashion of her country, set in evergreen leaves, on the knot of her jet hair, tightly combed back, relieved the brown face almost grim with gravity. Her black peering eyes watched the preacher. The unknown tongue did not weary her. She was in the house of God and among the friends of Jesus, and longed all the week long for the Lord's-day. When greeted by any friend at the close of the service, her face could hardly be recognized as the same. Her sparkling eye, and a look of laughter irradiated it all over. When asked if she did not weary in this country, she said to the missionary, 'Here where I can speak so little to man, I speak the more to God.' At leaving Edinburgh she said she had been happy there,

but she knew it was because she loved the Saviour she had received so much kindness.

"Those who remained after the crowded meeting in St. Luke's Church, can never forget the animated dialogue carried on in Chinese between Mr. Burns and Boo-a, to whom it was very trying to appear in the great assembly, but for the willingness she felt to profess her faith in Christ before her Scottish brethren, one of whom had first carried the gospel to her family in China. Her son had already been baptized; but when her daughters were mentioned she pointed to her brow, where the water of baptism had been sprinkled, and sorrowfully shook her head. The Sabbath before her departure she sat down at the Lord's table, by her own earnest desire, and much enjoyed the ordinance. There the disciples of Jesus from the east and the west, the north and the south, can meet and understand the common language of its sacred symbols, feeding through them on the one Saviour, even while the barrier of varied tongues prevents other intercourse."[1]

In the meanwhile Mr. Burns was actively engaged in endeavouring to extend and deepen the interest in the Chinese cause, which had already begun to be felt in Scotland, and which had shortly before led to the formation of an auxiliary society in aid of the English mission. He sought especially to engage the interest of those congregations amongst whom he had chiefly laboured in former years, and who would thus most readily respond to

[1] *China and the Missions at Amoy*, with Notice of the Opium Trade. By George F. Barbour, Esq. Edinburgh, 1855.

his calls both by active efforts and by prayers. Those who then renewed their acquaintance with him were struck with the change which so short an interval of years had made upon him. The effects of a tropical climate, combined with almost incessant and exhausting labours, had sensibly told upon the vigour of a frame, which the rigours of a Canadian winter had already partially broken. The fresh, sanguine, youthful, and even boyish look, which his early hearers remembered so well, had given place to an aspect of ripe and almost fading manhood, which seemed to tell of the lapse not of six but of twenty years. His countenance was sallow, his brow furrowed, his head tinged with gray, and his eye if still bright was bright with a milder brightness. His spirit too had become riper and more mellow. Time and experience had wrought in him a gracious sweetness and human kindliness of temper, which in the young Boanerges were less conspicuous. He was more genial, more loving, more freely communicative and companionable, less restrained and austere, than in former days. There was less fire perhaps, but even more fervour; less of the Baptist—more of the Christ. It seemed as if the exalted tone of Christian devotedness which he ever sustained were now less with him a matter of effort and struggle, and more of a holy habit in which grace had become as a second nature. Comparative exile too from the household of faith, amid heathen scenes and heathen faces, made his heart warm towards his Christian brethren, and pour itself forth in fuller loving converse, as one that felt more than ever at home. "His intercourse with us in private," writes his esteemed brother-in-law, the Rev.

Thomas Bain of Cupar Angus, "was of a much more genial and social character, while at the same time equally hallowed and Christ-like. He took great interest in the children, taking down all their names that he might remember them individually in prayer." His preaching too was considerably altered. The fiery intensity and somewhat spasmodic energy of former days had given place to a more full and equable flow of spiritual instruction and fervent appeal; while the frequent allusion and illustrative anecdote from the scenes of his distant field of labour, perpetually reminded the hearer that the evangelist had become the missionary. In every other way too we were reminded of this. While his bodily presence was in Scotland, it was evident that his heart and more than half his thoughts were still in China. He talked of Chinese scenes, sung Chinese hymns, recited far into the night Chinese chapters and psalms, and abounded in details of Chinese customs, traits, and ways of life, such as he too seldom indulged in in his letters. Nor was he forgotten by those whom he thus so continually remembered. Of this he received a peculiarly touching proof in a letter addressed to him as their spiritual father by the infant church at Pechuia, which in the *naïve* simplicity and freshness of its fervent and loving words breathes the very spirit of apostolic times, and which well deserves a permanent record in connection with his life and labours. The benignant look of strange delight with which, one morning in the Free Church manse at Kilsyth, he pored over this precious scroll, and deciphered and explained to us its mystic hieroglyphic lines, is to me a picture never to be forgotten. It was to the following effect:—

"Given to be inspected by Mr. Burns and all the disciples.

"We, who have received the grace of Jesus Christ, send a letter to pastor Wm. Burns, (*lit.* shepherd-teacher *Pin-ui-lim*). We wish that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ may give to all the holy disciples in the Church grace and peace. Now we wish you to know that you are to pray to God for us; for you came to our market-town, and unfolded the gracious command of God, causing us to obtain the grace of God. Now, as we have a number of things to say, we must send this communication. We wish you deeply to thank God for us, that in the intercalary seventh month and thirteenth day, pastor Johnston (*lit.* shepherd-teacher *Jin-sin*) established a free school here; there are twelve attending it. Formerly, in the third month, a man, whose name is *Chun-sim*, belonging to the village of *Chieng-choan* (pure fount village), heard you preaching in the village of *Hui-tsau* (pottery village). Many thanks to the Holy Spirit who opened his blinded heart, so that in the seventh month he sent a communication to the church at Amoy, praying the brethren to go to the village. They went and spoke for several days, and all the villagers with delighted heart listened. Also in the town of *Chiôh-bey*, the Holy Spirit is powerfully working (*lit.* influencing, moving); the people generally (*lit.* man, man) desire to hear the gospel. The brethren and missionaries have gone together several times; and now, in the village of Ka-lâng, there are two men, *Ch'eng-soan* and *Sui-mui*, who are joining heart with the brethren in prayer. Teacher! we, in this place, with united heart, pray, and bitterly (*i.e.* earnestly) beg of God to give you a level plain (*i.e.* prosperous journey) to go home, and beg of God again to give you a level plain (good journey) quickly to come. Teacher! you know that our faith is thin (*i.e.* weak) and in danger. Many thanks to our Lord and God, who defends us as the apple of the eye. Teacher! from the time that we parted with you in the seventh month, we have been meditating on our Lord Jesus' love to sinners, in giving up His life for them; also

thinking of your benevolence and good conduct, your faith in the Lord, and compassion for us. We have heard the gospel but a few months; our faith is not yet firm (*lit.* hard, solid). Teacher! you know that we are like sheep that have lost their shepherd, or an infant that has lost its milk. Many thanks to the Holy Spirit, our Lord, morning and evening (*i.e.* continually), comforts our hearts, [and gives us] peace. And in the seventh month, the twenty-fourth day, the brethren with united heart prayed, and shedding tears, ***bitterly begged*** of God again to send a number of pastors, quickly to come, again to teach the gospel. We wish that God our Father may grant this prayer, which is exactly that which the heart desires, (*i.e.* Amen.)"

Then follow nine names, being those of all the members of the church at Pechuia at the date when the letter was written. It was learned afterwards that they had subsequently addressed a similar appeal to the American missionaries, every sentence of which, Mr. Talmage writes, was prayed over. "They would write a sentence, and then pray, and then write another sentence, and then pray again." Well might an ardent friend of the cause exclaim in reference to this deeply affecting incident:— "Never did a more touching appeal come from a heathen land for ambassadors of Christ! China is thus in truth stretching out her hands to God!"

While the native Christian disciples thus spoke for themselves, the most cheering tidings also reached him from other quarters of their steadfastness and joy, as well as of the extension of the sacred influence throughout the district around. In a letter which reached Mr. Burns while still in Scotland, Mr. Doty writes:—

"The little church at Pechuia continues to dwell in

love, and to become more and more established in the truth. There is still much of the same spirit of prayer and hungering after the word. . . . But what shall I tell you of the Lord's visitation of mercy at Chióh-bey? Again, truly, are we as those that dream. The general features of the work are very similar to what you witnessed at Pechuia. The instrumentality has been native brethren almost entirely. Attention was first awakened in one or two by I-jû and Tick-jām, who went to Chióh-bey together, the former with the opium pills. This was two or three months ago. This was followed up by repeated visits of other brethren from Pechuia and Amoy. Shortly the desire to hear the Word was so intense, that there would be scarcely any stop day or night; the brethren in turns going, and breaking down from much speaking in the course of three or four days, and coming back to us almost voiceless. An establishment has been rented in extent nearly equal to that at Pechuia. Here daily and almost hourly the Word is preached, the Scriptures studied, and prayer and praise offered. There are some fifteen persons who seem to have been spiritually wrought upon, several of whom give pleasing evidence of regeneration. Among these is one of the persons rescued and saved from the water and death, at the slaughter on retaking Amoy. He was healed on board the hospital junk, and is the same person, I conjecture, who told you or Dr. Young that, 'as he was about to be executed, he prayed to Jesus.' He says he has been praying ever since, especially that Jesus would establish a church at Chióh-bey, that he might enjoy the means of grace.

There are several persons interested in villages around who come to town to spend the Sabbath. Judging from the visit of last week, I do not see but necessity is laid upon us to arrange for their being received into the visible church. Still, what are we to do becomes a serious question. We are already taxed beyond time and strength, and cannot give adequate pastoral care to the flocks already gathered; shall we add another? But I won't close despondingly, knowing, as I do, that Jesus knows and will care for His own. He will provide. Praise Him, and pray for greater blessings still."

Such good news as these from the far country of his adoption must have been to the missionary "as cold water to a thirsty soul," and would make him eagerly long to return to the work from which he had been so abruptly called away. He sailed again for China in the ship *Challenger* on the 9th March, along with the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, a distinguished alumnus of Glasgow University and of the New College, Edinburgh, who had devoted himself to the Chinese cause, and who was ordained by the Free Church Presbytery of Glasgow on the 21st of February, 1855.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1855–1858.

SHANGHAE, SWATOW, ETC.

INSTEAD of resuming at once his interrupted labours in the province of Fo-kien, Mr. Burns proceeded in the first instance to the north, with the view of attempting if possible to reach the head-quarters of the Taeping rebels, then established at Nanking, and at the very crisis of their singular and mysterious career. The most contradictory rumours had prevailed with regard to the real character and probable result of that movement, and especially as to the relation of its leaders to the Christian faith; and a strong desire existed in many quarters that some of the missionaries then in China should put themselves in communication with them, with the view of at once ascertaining the real state of the case, and taking advantage of any opportunities which might present themselves for furthering the Christian cause. The difficulties in the way of such an undertaking were notoriously very great, and Mr. Burns was evidently not sanguine as to its prosperous accomplishment; but still he deemed it his duty, according to his wont, resolutely to make the attempt, and thus prove whether it were the will of God or no. The expedition proved unsuccessful; but the

account he gives of it, written sometime after, is interesting, and may be appropriately here introduced, as continuing in the most authentic form the thread of our narrative:—

"I see from the *Witness* of May 8th, received to-day, that in a reference made to a letter from Amoy, it is said, 'Mr. B. preached for some days to crowds of the gay inhabitants of this city (*Soo-chow*), on his return from an attempt to reach the patriot camp at Nanking.' This statement is incorrect, as I only passed through the suburbs of the city in a boat, and this under the surveillance of mandarin officers, who did not, however, hinder the distribution of books and tracts as we passed along. As, for important reasons, I forbade at the time any account of this attempt to reach Nanking being published at Shanghae, and when writing home I purposely made the most meagre allusion to it, it is no wonder if misstatements more important than the one above quoted should be made by any one who had occasion to refer to the matter. It occurs to me that now it may not be without use to take this opportunity of giving some details regarding that journey, as it was one on which, though it failed as regards its primary object, I experienced more than usual marks of the Lord's gracious care and guidance. It was about the beginning of August, 1855, ten days after reaching Shanghae from England, that, in company with a Chinese servant from the neighbourhood of Shanghae, and who having gone with a missionary (Mr. Milne) to England, returned with Mr. Douglas and myself in the *Challenger*, I set out in a *woo-sung* boat to try whether

the way were open to reach the insurgent camp. I went in my own dress, and had resolved that unless permitted to proceed without disguise or artifice, I should return, or rather confine my efforts in making known divine truth to those whom we should meet on the way, or who should hinder us from going on to the desired destination. After proceeding rather slowly, I think for three days and a half, up the Yang-tze-Kiang, we were on a Saturday favoured with a prosperous wind, which bore us rapidly on against the stream of the river, and brought us early in the afternoon to *Tan-T'oo*, a town not far below *Chin-keang-foo*, and situated at one of the openings of the Great Canal into the *Yang-tze-Kiang*. Our getting thus far without impediment was not a little remarkable, for we had already passed two Imperial outposts, and at *Tan-T'oo* our boat was lying in the midst of a mandarin encampment. How was this, you will ask? We were just passing the head of a large island in the river, and running with a fresh breeze towards Pagoda Hill (I suppose from ten to twenty miles below *Chin-keang-foo*), when, at the mouth of a creek on the south side of the river, we met the first trace of the Imperial forces encompassing the insurgents. A number of boats were moored here, and as we approached one of them pushed off to meet us and examine what we were. I felt that now, unless God remarkably favoured us, our journey must at once come to an end, and, hid in the cabin of the boat, I prayed that the Lord would graciously interpose. The boat pushed out to meet us, waving a flag and calling us to wait and give account of ourselves; but the boatmen, no doubt alarmed, told them they had a

foreigner on board, and ran on. The guard-boat, whether satisfied or not, saw that it was too late to overtake us, and, no doubt reporting that all was right, returned to their station. Shortly after this, in consequence of a bend in the river at Pagoda Hill, the boat made a tack towards the north bank, and this course I saw would directly bring us to a mandarin encampment with a guard-ship anchored in front of it. I might have told the boatman to make his course short and try to keep clear of further inquiries, but I felt this would have been a subterfuge; and so running straight on, I soon heard the cry of voices inquiring what we were, the boatmen also were calling loudly that I should come out and take the responsibility on myself. I now expected we should be boarded and detained; but coming out I found that there was no small boat near, but only a company of twenty or thirty persons looking on us from the mandarin vessel. I almost involuntarily bowed to them; they graciously returned the salutation; the boat *was put about*, and we were gone again upon our course without remark or hindrance! Our character was now of course established, by having passed successfully these outer guards, and about three P.M. we took up our place at *Tan-T'oo* without inquiry made, among the boats of the Imperial soldiers. As the day was Saturday, I resolved to spend the Sabbath at *Tan-T'oo*, and here my companion and myself (he was then considerably interested in the gospel, and is now a professing Christian and assistant-preacher in the hospital of the London Mission at Shanghae) on Saturday afternoon and the whole of Sabbath had a full opportunity of making known the truth and

distributing books both among the inhabitants of the town and the mandarin soldiers, who were congregated to the number of some thousands in it. No one seemed to wonder at our visit, or to suspect that we had any design of going among the insurgents. Indeed the people were afraid to allude to the insurgent party at all. The town had been already in their hands and might soon be so again. Our boatmen, who had been prevailed on to come thus far, now obstinately refused to proceed farther. We had often reasoned with them on the subject; but, to cut the matter short, the head-man (there were three boatmen), on our getting moored at *Tan-T'oo* said, somewhat curtly, 'Now, if you want to go to Nanking, you can get out and walk.' No offer of reward would induce them to go a step further. They said it was just possible that we might get to Nanking alive; but that I, and still more they, could not hope to return. Their boat would be lost, &c.; but it was said, 'You will be remunerated.' They replied, 'Of what use will money be when we have lost our lives?' Finding them thus decided, and seeing no other way open consistently with truth and integrity, I arrived unwillingly at the conclusion that, if after the Sabbath was past, circumstances wore the same aspect, this attempt to reach the insurgents must be abandoned. I had asked the boatmen where they would propose to go in case of not proceeding farther towards Nanking. They replied, 'We will return to Shanghae by the Great Canal' (literally, as they call it, 'Transport-provision-River'). This course recommended itself as second best, if the original one must be abandoned; and so, early on Monday morning,

finding the way to Nanking closed, we passed through *Tan-T'oo* into the Great Canal on our homeward route. In entering the canal we had to pass a custom-house, but a bow to the officials from our boat, coupled no doubt with the thought that if we had come too far from home, we were at any rate now turning the head homewards—this sufficed to gain us a free entrance. We now went on to the district city of *Tan-yang*, distant about twenty miles. We were examined at the custom-house as we arrived, and such a visit from a foreigner seemed to excite surprise. We were however going, as every one could see, in the right direction (Shanghae), and had come from an unsuspected quarter, *Tan-T'oo;* thus we were allowed to pass, and a present of books was received with politeness. After passing a little farther along the canal, which skirts I believe the south and east of the city, we *brought to* near the south gate, and from the boats and the population on shore were soon surrounded by a large crowd, eager to look at the foreigner (an uncommon sight in these parts), and also to get possession of the books we were distributing. At this time I had but an imperfect knowledge of the Shanghae colloquial, and that would but poorly serve here, owing to a difference of dialect. Still I could say a few things which they understood—their anxiety to comprehend no doubt quickening their apprehension. I would have got on to all appearance well in this work, but a drawback arose through the uninvited assistance of a number of *Canton* men—soldiers or followers of military officers from the south. Having some greater acquaintance with foreigners than the natives of the locality, and

finding I could converse with them in their own dialect, they were too officious in their friendship to me, as well as harsh and overbearing to the crowds who pressed forward to get books. To avoid the crowd, they almost forced me on board one of their mandarin boats; but I had hardly got on board until the crowd pressed after us down the sloping bank, and by the pressure behind, those next to the water were in danger of getting a plunge. One man went down, and on seeing this I rushed on shore, and with some effort regained a position on the level ground. Perhaps it was on account of this little confusion, that when I got to our boat I found that some people had been there from the mandarin's office requesting that we should remove farther off from the city. The boatmen wished to get quite away; but after moving on to near the east gate, they consented to *bring to* there for the night. The following morning I went on shore with books, and walked along the bank of the canal by the foot of the city wall towards the south gate, where we had been the previous day. Here I was met by a kind of policeman, who asked me what my object was in coming, and said the district magistrate wished to know. Having had little previous acquaintance with Chinese mandarins, and having a good supply of books, I said that if the mandarin wished to make any inquiries about me, I would be happy to go in person with him to his office. He said this would be still better, and so we walked on, in by the gate, through streets and fields, and at last to the office. I did not see the magistrate, but great numbers of people collected, both officials and people from the town, and to

them, while in waiting, I had opportunity of giving books and saying a few words in regard to the first principles of divine truth. After some delay, one or two of the magistrate's assistants came out to inspect me, and having asked through the policeman who brought me there, whether I was willing to leave their city, the same policeman conducted me through the city by another route to the east gate, and so back to our boat. It seemed for the moment that the matter was ended, and that we had nothing to do but to go on our way peaceably; but after a short time the original policeman and one or two more came and asked my companion (he had not been with me in the city, I was alone) to go on shore as they wanted to speak to him. He was about to go, when I became alarmed, and said to them that if any one was to be beaten (signing to that effect) it was I and not he, and that if he went I must go also. They said there was no fear of that, and that if I went also it would be better. I got some books and we went ashore outside the east gate. In a small hall we found an assistant magistrate seated in full dress waiting for us. We were called to sit together at his left hand, the place of honour, and he proceeded to ask at my companion about me and our objects in coming. In answer to the inquiry who I was, we put down in writing that I was a disciple of Jesus and a publisher of [His] religion. He saw I was a foreigner, but never thought of asking to what particular country I belonged, and in writing we did not think of making reference to this.[1] He said with Chinese politeness, that as on the way to

[1] I always told I was an Englishman.

Shanghae people might give us trouble, an escort would be sent with us! and that they would very soon be ready to set out. I expressed the hope that they would not prevent us from distributing our books. He said that full liberty would be given us to do this. We then returned to our boat, the original policeman and another remaining on board to see that we did not get out of sight. We should have remained here until our escort was ready, but the poor people were so clamorous for books that the ire of the old policeman was aroused, and at last, when all other means failed, he ordered the boatman to move on for about a mile or so from the city. All the way we were followed on the banks by earnest applicants for books, and it was truly amusing to see the policeman at one time chiding and remonstrating with the people for thus following us, and then once or twice when his eye fell on an acquaintance among the applicants, his zeal for his office was forgotten, and he came in to get from us *a large book for his friend!* At last when we had got to a considerable distance from the city, the evening was falling, and as we had neither wine nor opium for the policeman, he thought of going back to the city, got his arms full of books for his friends and left us. Poor man! he had not gone far, we were told, until the people mobbed him and took his books from him. The sight of this poor people, so eager to get our books, but alas! so little able to understand them, was fitted to affect the heart. May the day soon come when the Christian teacher shall have liberty to go and make known to them fully the love of God in the gift of His Son for sinners, and the power of the blood of

Jesus to cleanse from all sin. After the policeman left us we had still many applicants for books; our boatmen moved on, and in their eagerness to gain their object, several from time to time went into the water and swam to our boat (a distance of only a yard or two). But how could you give a book to a man who had to swim with it on shore? the book, one would think, must get wet. But nay, the Chinese are in many things singular; here was a new expedient. The swimmer got his book, placed it on his brow, made it firm there by his tail tied round his head, and swam to the bank! As it was becoming dark we reached a market-town extending for some distance on both sides of the canal, and here no sooner had we arrived than our coming became known (I know not how), and from that moment onward until our stock of books was more than two-thirds exhausted, we were beset by crowds of applicants, and among them a larger number than usual of respectable people, and even several Buddhist priests. It was well nigh midnight when our escort—two retainers of the mandarin's office—made up to us here in their boat. They seemed alarmed lest we should have got beyond their reach, and were proportionably glad to find us here quietly waiting them. We were glad also that our book distribution had advanced so rapidly during the short respite allowed us. Our escort were intelligent men, and conversed with us at length in our boat before going to rest in their own. Next day we moved on to the *inferior department* city of *C'hang-chow*, where our escort was changed, those from *Tan-yang* returning home, and two from *C'hang-chow* accompanying us to the next

city, viz. the *district* city of *Woo-seih*, like *C'hang-chow* situated on the banks of the Great Canal. Here again our conductors gave place to others, or rather, I think, to *one* only, who the following day accompanied us to the famed city of *Soo-chow*, the allusion to which in the newspaper you have sent me has given occasion for this unusually long narrative. The stage from *Woo-seih* to *Soo-chow* was rather longer than usual, and the afternoon was so advanced when we reached one of the principal city gates, that our escort was just in time to get in before the gate was shut. In the former times of China's peace, and *Soo-chow's* famed grandeur, the gates would not shut so early as now, when the sound of rebellion is heard so near as at *Nanking* and *Chin-keang*. It was in passing through a long suburb on our way to the city gate that we had an opportunity of witnessing, in the many gaily decorated pleasure-boats we passed, evidence at once of the wealth and the moral pollution of this famed city. It was during this transit, too, that in this crowded street of 'Vanity Fair' we distributed the word of life in the form of tracts and copies of the Scripture. Our escort, on this occasion an old man, not so lettered as some of his predecessors, was most diligent in this work, aiding us in it as if for this alone he had been sent. Some came in boats to get books, and some reached out with bamboo basket-hooks from their doors and windows opening to the canal. (These basket-hooks they use for picking up things from the water.) This, alas! was all that we were able to do at *Soo-chow;* others have been able to make a somewhat longer stay, and to do more, and the time is

coming fast, we trust, when *Soo-chow*, like Corinth, will receive the gospel, and many of its people exchange their luxuries for higher and more enduring pleasures, being 'washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.'

"Here I might close this narrative, but as the sequel embraces some circumstances possessed of a certain interest, and which I have never till now alluded to in writing, I shall proceed with the remainder as briefly as I can. As I have mentioned above, our escort reached Soo-chow just in time to get into the city before the gates closed. It was perhaps on this account that some delay had taken place in appointing those who were to succeed, and next morning, when the usual hour for starting had passed, no escort appeared. Our boatmen did not think it needful to wait any longer, and moved on leaving them to follow. We felt the rather free to do this as the day was Saturday, and on the previous day we had told our escort that on the following day, the Christian Sabbath, we would not travel, but rest at K'wan-shan, the next city on our way, and the only other we had to pass before reaching Shanghae. Moving on we arrived at *K'wan-shan* early in the afternoon, and spent the remainder of the day, and also the whole of the Sabbath, in preaching and book distribution outside two of the city gates. No escort appeared, we did not regret their absence, and on Monday morning we left for Shanghae, where we arrived on Tuesday with no other event than that on the night previous we had a visit from thieves, who, at the place where we had to bring to, frequently

take advantage of the shallowness of the water to pilfer from boats. The head boatman knew our danger, and enjoined on all to sleep wakefully, never proposing however that we should watch in turns. For a while we were wakeful, but then we all slept, and no one awoke until both the boatmen and ourselves had been partly robbed. We had been absent a fortnight from Shanghae, and returned rejoicing in the Lord's mercy throughout our journey, and not least in this that the mandarin officers had (as we supposed) ceased to follow us, and so permitted us to end it peacefully. Soon after, I again set out to another part of the country, ready to forget the matter as one of the things that were 'behind,' but on returning to Shanghae, I was informed by missionary brethren that the Taow-T'ae, the highest civil authority, had been in search of me. He had sent communications to all the foreign consuls complaining of a foreigner who had wandered up in the direction of *Chin-keang*, &c. The communication sent down about me from *Tan-yang* was defective in this, that it gave no hint to what nation I belonged. I was described of course by a Chinese name and surname, and this in itself could to a foreign consul give almost no clue to the party intended; besides, I had been but a few days in Shanghae when I set out, and the English consul neither knew of my being in Shanghae, nor of my having gone on this journey; and to crown all, the escort, trusting I suppose to the papers they carried for my discovery, had failed to conduct me to Shanghae, and knew nothing as to where I lodged. There was no clue to the real person, and all the consuls answered

that they knew of no such person as the one spoken of. Where was he? let the *Taow-T'ae* point him out. After this answer had been given and the matter was over, the British consul learned from one of the missionaries who was the person intended, and I received through the same channel a verbal message to be wary about going to such places in these times of rebellion. Here the matter seemed to end, but it was not yet so. I had again gone into the country, and on my return was surprised to be told by Mr. Wylie of the London Mission Press that a few days before two men had been seeking me, and that they wished my aid in getting out of prison the son of one of them, who with another police-runner had been put in prison at *K'wan-shan* for failing to conduct me to Shanghae. The matter evidently stood thus: The Taow-T'ae having failed in his efforts to discover who I was, had given orders for the arrest of the men whose duty it was to come with me to Shanghae, and to know where I could be found. With a view to their release, the father of one of them came to Shanghae, and through a native printer who was acquainted with Mr. Wylie, inquired of him whether he knew anything of the person alluded to. 'Yes,' said Mr. Wylie. 'He stays here when he is in Shanghae, but at present he is in the country.' On learning this from Mr. Wylie, we at once sent for the printer. He was absent from the city at the time, but when he returned he found me out in the boat in which I had then located myself, sometimes being at Shanghae, and sometimes at other places. He said that in order to the release of those in confinement, it was necessary that I

should be found, and be conducted, he supposed, as I originally should have been, to the English consul's office. It seemed now as if I must be brought into trouble from which I had thought that I had most mercifully escaped. I felt however that there was no course open but the one suggested, and accordingly, in company with the father of the prisoner and the printer, his friend, I went directly to the office of the *Taow-T'ae*. My companions went in to make known the matter, and soon returned to say that they had been told that this was not the place for a foreigner to come to, and that if I had anything to say I must go to the English consul. In reply to this, I informed them that I had no business at the consul's, as he now knew who I was, and where I was to be found, and that our coming here was no matter of mine, but concerned solely the men in confinement, in order to whose release it was supposed that I must be found and made over to the English consul. I was now on the spot and was ready to go with them, if it was desired, to the consul. They agreed to the justness of this view of the case, and said that the proper parties would go with me as soon as the papers necessary in the case had been got ready. While these were getting ready I had to wait for a long time in a side room, and here among many of the sub-officials I had a good opportunity of distributing Christian books, and speaking of the gospel message. At last, the delay was so long that I saw it would soon be too late to find the consul in his office, and I returned to my boat, having agreed that next morning they should call for me on the way. I had however reached my boat but

a short time, when the printer came with sorrow to tell me that he found my going to the consul's would be of no use; that as usual, what was wanted was money, and that when this was forthcoming, the men would be released, but not sooner![1] His friend, the father of one of the men, was now going home to try and make up the sum needed. He made no application to me for aid, and since then I have heard nothing more of the matter. Thus ended my attempt to reach the insurgent camp at Nanking. To me, in how much mercy, but, alas! not without suffering brought upon others on my account. It was a signal mercy in the case that the Sabbath had intervened, and that we had spent it not in journeying but in preaching publicly at *K'wan-shan*. Had it been otherwise, it might have been said with some appearance of truth that we had purposely eluded the mandarin escort, and so brought trouble on them which belonged of right to ourselves."

For the next six months he continued to make his head-quarters at Shanghae, from which as a centre he made frequent and extensive excursions amongst the towns and villages around. Living for the most part in his boat, and following leisurely the course of the canals and rivers which here spread like a net-work over the whole face of the country, he scattered far and near the precious seed over a rich and fertile region, which, with the contiguous plain of Ningpo to the south, may be well described as the very garden of China. Stretching out in an unbroken expanse for twenty or thirty miles from

[1] I suppose the *Taou-T'ae* never heard of the matter.

the sea-board to the hills, "one vast rice-field," dotted over with towns and villages, and with dark clumps of mulberry-trees—with the white or brown sails of innumerable river craft everywhere in sight moving over the tranquil land—it is rapturously described by travellers as the very picture of smiling plenty, teeming population, and peaceful industry. It is thus described by Mr. Fortune, as seen by him, in the summer of this same year, from the summit of a wooded hill near the city of Hoo-chow at its western margin: "It was a lovely evening—the 18th of June—the sun was just setting behind the high mountain range to the westward, and although the day had been oppressively warm, the air was now comparatively cool and enjoyable. I was in the midst of most charming scenery, and although only about two miles distant from a crowded and bustling city everything was perfectly quiet and still. Overhead the rooks were seen returning home for the day, and here and there on a solitary bush, or in a grove of trees, the songsters of the woods were singing their last and evening song of praise. Mulberry-trees, with their large rich green leaves, were observed in all directions, and the plantations extended all over the low country and up to the foot of the hills. The hills here were low and isolated, and appeared as if they had been thrown out as guards between the vast plain which extends eastward to the sea, and the mountains of the west. For the most part they were covered with natural forests and brushwood, and did not appear to have ever been under cultivation. In some parts their sides were steep —almost perpendicular—while in others their slope was

gentle from their base to the summit. Here and there some rugged-looking granite rocks reared their heads above the trees, and were particularly striking.

"Looking to the hills, there all was nature pure and unadorned, just as it had come from the hands of the Creator; but when the eye rested on the cultivated plain, on the rich mulberry plantations, on the clear and beautiful canals studded with white sails, the contrast was equally striking, and told a tale of a teeming population, of wealth and industry."

Had the traveller stood there two months after, one of the white sails he saw might have been that of the devoted missionary unweariedly pursuing his sacred calling, amid the crowds of other voyagers "running to and fro" along those shining pathways on other errands. But his eye rested not upon the opulent beauty of the land, but upon the homes of its people, over whom his heart yearned, as he saw them wholly given to the cares of the present life, or to vain idolatrous rites which blindly pointed to another. "Remember me," says he, "from this place, in the midst of a people of a strange tongue, and yet as if at home, to all who love the Lord Jesus and seek the coming of his kingdom and the gathering in of his elect ones in China. O let such pray for us! Ye that make mention of the Lord *keep not* silence, and give Him no rest until He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth."

The following extracts will give a still more distinct idea of the nature of his labours at this time:—

"*December 13th*, 1855.—I write these lines on board a river-boat, which has been my principal habitation during the past

three months, and in which I returned to this place on Monday last, after an absence in the surrounding country of twenty-six days. I was accompanied by a native professing Christian, received into the visible church during the present year, and now employed to circulate the Scriptures in connection with the Million Testament Scheme. We visited several market-towns, the names of which I need hardly trouble you with, remaining one or two days at places of smaller importance, and for a full week at one place, Fung-king (or Maple-tree Creek), where a foreigner had hardly been seen, and where the interest felt in our message was rather greater than usual. Two or three came to our boat to pray with us, and at one time I almost hoped that the anxiety of the people would have detained us for a longer time. We spent a few days also at the city of Tung-keang, about thirty miles from Shanghae, and frequently visited by missionaries, as well as by the foreign community generally; but here we found but little encouragement, and the rabble were even inclined to use us a little unceremoniously. The last place we visited was a market-town, Min-hang, about halfway between Hun-keang and Shanghae, and here we were prepared to meet with less attention than usual, as the place is often trodden by foreign feet, and there are few among the missionaries, I suppose, who have not been there. However, in this case our fears were disappointed and our hopes much more than exceeded, for during the Saturday and Sabbath which we spent at this place, we had usually large and attentive audiences, and on the Sabbath evening, when it was getting dark, we still continued to preach to an engaged audience, with whom at the close I felt at liberty to join in public prayer to the living and true God in the name of Jesus. It is not generally our custom thus to pray with the people, preaching as we do in the public street, &c., and alas! too frequently to a people not prepared to join in spirit with us."

Now and then the peculiarity of the circumstances would impart a certain tinge of romance to the scene.

That strange sermon, for instance, under cloud of night, in a lone inland village, by the light of lanterns, suggests a picture singularly vivid and striking:—

"When it was dark we halted for the night at Chung-too-keaon (or Passage-for-all-Bridge), where there are but a few houses, and where we little thought of finding a congregation. However, we had hardly halted before we were arrested by the sound of a multitude of voices as of a crowd dispersing, and were informed that there had been a stage-play going on of an unusually immoral kind, and that the people had now dispersed, so that it was too late to reach them. However, we went ashore, and although the mass of these poor heathens were gone, we still found as many as we could address with effect, lingering about the gambling and eating house. The people had their lanterns and we had ours, and, amid the darkness thus broken, we addressed a multitude of precious souls, assisted graciously by our God to speak with more than usual earnestness and liberty of speech; the people also, as if panic-struck by being overtaken by such a message in such circumstances, listened with a fixed and serious interest. I called on them to join with us in prayer to the true God, in the name of the Saviour of sinners, that he would deliver them from their sins, and save them from the punishment which sin was preparing for them. At the beginning of the address to God's throne there was some noise of voices, but towards the close all was breathless stillness. My companion and I were encouraged by thus meeting, as if by God's special guidance, with opportunities of declaring his truth and calling fellow-sinners to repentance. . . .

"*Twenty-five miles from Shanghae, January 26th*, 1856.—MY DEAR MOTHER,—Taking advantage of a rainy day which confines me to my boat, I pen a few lines, in addition to a letter to Dundee containing a few particulars which I need not repeat. It is now forty-one days since I left Shanghae on this last occasion. An excellent young English missionary,

Mr. Taylor, of the Chinese Evangelization Society, has been my companion during these weeks—he in his boat, and I in mine,—and we have experienced much mercy, and on some occasions considerable assistance in our work. . . . I must once more tell the story I have had to tell already more than once, how four weeks ago, on the 29th of December, I put on the Chinese dress, which I am now wearing. Mr. Taylor had made this change a few months before, and I found that he was in consequence so much less incommoded in preaching, &c., by the crowd, that I concluded that it was my duty to follow his example. We were at that time more than double the distance from Shanghae that we now are at, and would have been still at as great a distance, had we not met at one place with a band of lawless people, who demanded money and threatened to break our boats if their demands were refused. The boatmen were very much alarmed, and insisted on returning to some place nearer home. These people had previously broken in violently a part of Mr. Taylor's boat because their unreasonable demand for books was not complied with. We have a large, very large field of labour in this region, though it might be difficult in the meantime for one to establish himself in any particular place. The people listen with attention, but we need the power from on high to convince and convert. Is there any spirit of prayer on our behalf among God's people in Kilsyth? or is there any effort to seek this spirit? How great the need is, and how great the arguments and motives for prayer in this case! The harvest is here indeed great, and the labourers are few and imperfectly fitted without much grace for such a work. And yet grace can make a few and feeble instruments the means of accomplishing great things—things greater than we can even conceive."

But a field already occupied by so many missionaries, and so "often trodden by foreign feet," could scarcely be an altogether congenial sphere of operations to one who

felt himself especially called to the work of an evangelistic pioneer. Accordingly, within less than two months from the date of the lines just quoted, he was again on his way to another and distant part of the country. A Christian friend, Captain Bowers, of the merchant ship the *Geelong*, had spoken in high terms of Swatow, a rising commercial mart at the eastern extremity of the Canton province, and the chief port of the department of Tie-chew, as an advantageous centre for missionary operations; and being himself about to sail thither, offered him a free passage should he be disposed to go and reconnoitre the ground. An invitation coming to him in this unsought and apparently providential way, and reaching him too at a time when no special attachment bound him to any other sphere, and when he was as it were waiting for a summons to some new service from the Master, came to him with all the force of a divine call; and he resolved, after brief but prayerful consideration, to close with it. It is probable also that he was on other grounds not indisposed to turn his face once more towards the Canton district, where seven years before he had begun his evangelistic labours in China, and which he had been compelled reluctantly to leave, without having made such full proof of his ministry as he had hoped and desired. He sailed from Shanghae early in March, and reached Swatow about the middle of that month. His next date is from that place, March 31, 1856:—

"*Swatow, March* 31*st*, 1856.—When I last wrote to you I was on the point of leaving Shanghae for this place in company with Mr. Taylor of the Chinese Evangelization Society.

We left on the 6th of March, and, after a favourable passage of six days, arrived here on the 12th. We were very averse to the thought of being located even temporarily on the island (Double Island), on which some of our countrymen have, by compact with the local magistrates, taken up their head-quarters, but were anxious, if possible, to find a location in the Chinese town of Swatow, which is on a promontory of the mainland, five English miles further up, at the mouth of the river Han. We were apprehensive lest we should not be permitted thus to locate ourselves; but in the gracious and all-governing providence of our God and Saviour, we found favour and assistance from those whom we least expected to aid us, viz. the Canton merchants here, who are the agents or correspondents of the foreigners (our countrymen) down the river; and two days after our arrival we were, to our own surprise and joy, enabled to take possession of the lodging which we have since been occupying unmolested. Our lodging is not indeed large, being only a small upper flat of a house occupied below as a shop; but it is sufficient for our present wants, and we are the more thankful for it as of vacant houses here there are almost none. Swatow is not a very large place, but it is growing at present very rapidly, and has all the appearance of being in a few years a place of great importance. During the first ten days after our arrival, the *Geelong* lay at anchor along with another ship off the town discharging cargo, and Captain Bowers continued to show us the same Christian kindness which he had manifested in bringing us here free of charge. On the two Sabbaths that occurred during these days, I preached on board his ship, and on week-day evenings also generally met for worship with him and his crew. For the last week they have been down at Double Island, and on Saturday (29th) I went down, and yesterday preached twice in his ship to such of our country-men as chose to attend. The number of ships at anchor there was, as usual, nearly a dozen, and among their captains and crews were an unusual number of Scotchmen, who, along

with others, came very readily not only to the forenoon service, but in nearly equal numbers to a second meeting in the evening. I felt it a great privilege to be allowed to preach the gospel in a place where it has been, as far as we know, seldom before proclaimed. Originally there seems to have been almost no population in Double Island, but since first the opium-ship captains, and afterwards some other foreign merchants, began to build houses and to occupy it, there has sprung up also a small Chinese town, consisting of those who live by business which the presence of the foreigners creates, or are occupied, alas! I am forced to add, in pandering to their unholy lusts. Yesterday-week (on the Lord's-day) a Malay sailor was murdered in a quarrel there; and yesterday a Chinese woman was also murdered, and another Malay sailor stabbed dangerously, if not fatally. The latter crime was the work, I understand, of a British sailor. Mr. Taylor and I are thankful indeed that we are permitted to live apart from a place where such tragedies are enacted, and where pollution and debauchery seem to stalk abroad without shame; but at the same time I shall feel it at once a duty and privilege to take every opportunity of preaching there either on ship-board or on shore while we remain in the neighbourhood. Mr. Taylor and myself came here quite undecided whether we should be able to attempt more than simply to make a running visit for the purpose of Scripture and tract distribution to the open parts of the country; but now that we see more fully the importance of this region as a vast and unoccupied scene for missionary labour, we are anxious, before going further, to prepare ourselves for the purpose of teaching the people orally by acquiring some knowledge of their dialect. This is a comparatively easy work in my case, the dialect spoken here being, as I formerly mentioned, very similar to that spoken at Amoy. We have as yet done very little in the way of active labour among this people, but would pray that our zeal may increase with our ability to improve the openings for usefulness that may be afforded us. We

have much need, as every one must see who considers our present position, of special grace to support and render us useful. For this grace may many be led to pray, that for the gift bestowed on us by the means of many persons, thanks may be afterwards given by many in our behalf, should it please the God of grace to preserve us in his truth and love, and make us a means of blessing to some of these dying millions."

While the aspect of the field in a moral and spiritual point of view was thus at first by no means encouraging, the representations given to him of its great importance had not been exaggerated. Situated on a narrow channel connecting two wide and spacious basins, the one running into the land and the other opening out to the sea, Swatow possesses all the advantages of a convenient and commodious commercial centre. Behind it is an extensive, opulent, and densely peopled district, for whose produce and enterprise it affords a natural outlet; while before it lies the direct and open pathway to all the commerce of the world. At about five miles' distance, near the entrance of the outer harbour, is the subordinate port and foreign station of Double Island, affording a convenient anchorage for vessels approaching either from the north or from the south. As a commercial mart it is only of recent formation, but has been rapidly growing in wealth and importance, and was two years after this advanced to a new position, by being placed by treaty amongst the number of the ports legally open to foreign residence and foreign traffic. It is, far more than even Hong-Kong or Canton, the true key to the whole district south of Amoy, from which it is distant along the coast-line about 150 miles.

The prospect, however, of a prosperous entrance into this new and untried field did not at first on further trial become more promising. Three months after, Mr. Burns was as it were still endeavouring in vain to effect a landing on what seemed an iron-bound and inhospitable shore.

"*At Nan-yang, ten miles from Swatow, July 16th*, 1856.—During the last fortnight I have been moving from place to place, making known the gospel message and distributing tracts, &c., in company with two professing Christians, natives of this district, who came up from Hong-Kong fully a month ago, sent by Mr. Johnson, an American missionary, to co-operate with us. Previously to their coming, I had been out on a missionary tour accompanied by a servant only. Mr. Taylor having occupied himself in learning the dialect of this district since our arrival at Swatow, left us a fortnight ago for Shanghae, intending, if the Lord will, to return in the course of a month or two, and bringing with him his medical apparatus, use his knowledge of medicine for the purpose of opening a door for more regular missionary operations among the people. Had we obtained a place suitable for indoor preaching at Swatow, I would not have ventured at this hot season to go about in the country. Difficulties, however, have been thrown in the way of our obtaining such a place, and so no other course has been left open but the one we are now following. We have met as yet with but little decided encouragement, but still something is done to spread an incipient knowledge of the truth, and in a field which has been so little cultivated we must not be discouraged if we meet not with immediate success."

Still as ever his eyes were unto the Lord, the salvation of Israel, as his one source of strength and hope of victory. Great indeed and heavy was the stone that closed the sepulchre in which slept this heathen people; but he

went forth in the strength of One who by one touch of His hand could roll it away:—

"I need perhaps as much as ever I did since I came to China the presence and power of God's quickening Spirit, to maintain divine love and compassion for souls in my heart. Are there those who feel for us in this unbroken field of heathenism, and cry to God with spiritual agonizings for the descent of the Spirit in his life-giving and converting power? The God of grace grant to us such helpers, for the glory of his own great name!"

He was every day painfully reminded of the urgent need of such help, and of the utter vanity of any other. Well might he, in contemplating the case of that blinded, debased, and almost savage people, have adopted the cry of Valignano, in looking across to that rock-bound coast, "O rock, rock, when wilt thou open?"

Again, in another letter, about the same time, he writes:—

"The people in this district are, I think, if possible, more blind and hardened in idolatry and sin than in any place (if we except Canton) where I have formerly laboured. Although society presents here the usual features of Chinese civilization, it is coupled with a barbarity in certain circumstances which I have seen or heard of nowhere else in China. The fishermen, boatmen, and people working in the fields, pursue their work in summer in a state of savage nudity; and within the last twenty years I am credibly informed, persons taken prisoners in the clan feuds have not only been cut to pieces, but their *heart* boiled and eaten by their enemies. Such is heathenism in this part of civilized China.

"The ravages of opium we meet with here on every hand, and the deterioration of the morals of the people generally I

cannot but ascribe, in great part, to the use of this ensnaring and destructive drug. When will measures be taken by those in power to lay an arrest on the opium traffic, which is inflicting such indescribable injury on this people, and which threatens in its progress by its direct, and still more by its indirect, effects—poverty and anarchy, to sweep away a great part of this nation from the face of the earth? How blinded by the love of money are they who seek to enrich themselves by the gains of such a traffic! Oh! what need have we here of gospel labourers, and of the power of God accompanying their words! Where are the volunteers for this service, and where are those who will hold up their hands in this fight?"

To the other difficulties of this arduous and trying service, "perils of robbers" were, as on so many former occasions, added. In a postscript to one of the letters just quoted, he writes:—"About two o'clock A.M., or past midnight, July 18th, 1856. We have just been visited by robbers, who have taken all but the clothes we wear, without however doing us any injury. This is a new call to pity, and to pray for this poor people, sunk so low in darkness and sin. One of our number, it is proposed, shall return to Swatow to get a small supply of money and books, while the other Christian and I go on to another town to await his return. We are preserved in much peace, and have just been joining in praise and prayer for this poor people."

A momentary gleam of light seemed now to break upon them in the unexpected kindness and cordiality of the people in some of the villages which they visited; but the sky was soon again overcast, and a train of events followed which might well have issued in a sad and

tragical conclusion. The history will be best told in his own words, in a letter bearing the unexpected date of "Canton, Oct. 10, 1856:"—

"*Canton, October 10th*, 1856.—MY DEAR SIR,—When I last wrote you in the middle of July, I and my companions had just been robbed in our lodgings at a village about sixteen miles from Swatow. The following day one of my companions returned to Swatow with my letters, and to obtain a fresh supply of books and money, while my other Christian companion and I went forward, as we had intended, to the town of Tang-leng, about six miles further on. We were without money, but God provided support for us in a way that was new to me. The people who took our books gladly contributed small sums of cash for our support, and the first day we thus collected enough to keep us for two days; a countryman also, going the same road, volunteered to carry our bag of books for us; it was heavy for our shoulders, but easy for his, and he said he would want no money, but only a book. Thus the Lord helped us in going forward on his work, instead of turning back to Swatow for help. At Tang-leng we were very well received. In the neighbourhood there are two native Christians, converted in connection with the American Baptist Mission in Siam, and who, though they are left much to themselves, seem to follow the Lord in sincerity. With these we had much pleasure in meeting on the Lord's-day, and at other times. A heavy and continued fall of rain detained us at Tang-leng for some weeks, without our being able to do much abroad; and at last, on Monday, August 18th, we left this town, intending to return to Swatow. Our course by water leading us to within five or six miles of the *Chaon-chow-foo* (chief city of the Chaon-chow department), we agreed to pay it a visit; but fearing lest we should give offence to the authorities, we determined, instead of living on shore, to make the boat which conveyed us there our head-quarters while we remained. On Tuesday the 19th

we went on shore, and were particularly well received by the people. The demand for our books among persons able to read them, was unusually great. In the meantime, however, an alarming report of the presence of a foreigner outside the city having been carried to the authorities, we were in the evening suddenly arrested in our boat, and, with all our books, &c., taken prisoners into the city. The same night we were examined publicly by the district magistrate, and after the interval of a day we were examined anew by a deputy (I suppose) of *Che-Foo*, or chief magistrate of the department. On these occasions my companions and myself had valuable opportunities of making known something of the gospel, and of the character and objects of Christ's disciples in China; and as there was a great demand for our books, the work of many days seemed to be crowded into one or two. The magistrates examined us with great mildness and deliberation, seeming anxious to obtain information rather than to find fault; and on the evening of the 21st, the day of our second examination, a sub-official was deputed to inform us that the magistrates found we had been arrested on a false report, and that if the Canton merchants at Swatow, or any one of them, would stand security for us, we would be allowed to return to that place. The Canton merchants (through whom the trade in foreign vessels is carried on at Swatow), on being written to, came forward in the kindest manner with the document required; but in the meantime, it appears, the magistrates had reflected that, having once arrested a foreigner, confined and examined him, they could not, according to law or with safety to themselves, give him up to any other than a foreign consul, and so I was told that I would be sent to Canton. On Saturday the 30th I was put on board a river-boat, and carried about a mile above the city. Here we remained until Tuesday morning, when, being joined by a number of officials, high and low, in all occupying four river-boats, and going to Canton, some in connection with my case, and some on other business, we at last commenced our

journey. I was provided with a servant, and with whatever food I wished, at the expense of the government; and had I been well, and had had with me a good supply of Christian books, I might have enjoyed the journey much. As the case was, my books were nearly all gone; and as to my health, a slight cold which I had caught before coming to the city had, through excitement, &c., taken the form of an intermittent fever, with chills (ague), which, violent at first, continued more or less during all my journey. Our course lay first up the Chaon-chow river against a rapid stream, through Ken-ying-chow, and then, when the river ceased to be navigable, we crossed the country through a hill-pass—a distance of about twenty miles—to where another river, flowing down through Heong-chow to Canton, becomes navigable for boats of considerable size. The first part of the journey was tedious, and (including days on which we halted until our business at the various cities we passed was concluded), we were on the way in all thirty-one days. The news of our arrest, and of my being sent to Canton, had reached Hong-Kong, and through the great kindness of many friends who felt anxious for my safety, and could not explain why we should be so long on the way, inquiries were made for us at the office of the native authorities in Canton. It was perhaps owing to this in part, that on reaching Canton on the morning of September 30th, instead of being taken to the mandarin's office, two men were sent by the authorities to conduct me straight from the boat to the office of the British consul. The consul has had a communication from the governor-general about the case. I did not see it, but the consul informed me that it was conceived in a mild strain, much more so than he had expected; and I am thus wonderfully preserved, and freed from the infliction of any punishment or penalty. I am sorry to add that there is reason to fear my two companions are still confined at Chaon-chow-foo, though the governor-general assures the consul they have been sent to their native districts (in the Chaon-chow department), to be liberated on

finding proper security. You will remember that these two men, though natives of that part of the country, have been for a number of years resident in Hong-Kong, and connected with the American Baptist Mission there. It was Mr. Johnson, the American missionary there, who sent them up in the beginning of June to act as colporteurs, and to co-operate with us as far as found desirable. Looking at the lenient view of our case which the native authorities both at Chaon-chow and here seemed led to take, I was disposed, now that my health is graciously restored, to proceed very soon back to Swatow, in the hope of being able to prosecute the missionary work there unmolested; but yesterday, when in the act of making arrangements for going to Hong-Kong, I was met by a message from the British plenipotentiary, conveyed to me by the consul, to the effect that, 'after the representations of the imperial commissioner, he should deem it imprudent and improper that I should return to the district from which I have been sent.' Met by such a message, from such a quarter, I think it will be my duty to delay making any movement of the kind I contemplated, at least until I hear from Mr. Taylor about his plans and prospects, and until the native brethren, as we hope they soon may, be released. Mr. Taylor went to Shanghae in the beginning of July, partly for a change during the hot months, and partly intending to bring down his medical apparatus to Swatow. Whether he has already come down, or whether, it may be, hearing at Shanghae of our arrest, he has delayed, I am as yet entirely ignorant. In the meantime, if shut up for a season at Canton, I am in the midst of kind missionary brethren, American and English; and my acquaintance with the Canton dialect, now revived, should save me, through the grace of God, from spending my time unprofitably. The field is the world, the seed is the Word of God. Most of those who came down with me from Chaon-chow were Canton men; they treated me with much respect and kindness, and with them, in the course of the month we spent together, I had

many conversations on the subject of the gospel, which I trust may not prove altogether useless. Looking back on the whole scene through which I have passed, and contrasting the life and favour granted us with the misconstruction and suffering to which we might have been subjected, I cannot but adore the wonderful goodness and power of Him to whom the kingdom belongs, and who unceasingly cares even for the most unworthy of his servants. While the people of God have need to pray for us that we may be guided to act aright, and not to rush into danger without cause, they have surely cause to give praise for deliverance vouchsafed, and for opportunities, such as seldom occur, of making known something of the truth of the gospel to men in authority, and to many others.

"I am glad to learn that at the time you wrote there was a prospect of Mr. Sandeman joining the missionary band in China. I trust he may be now on the way, and that he will come to be a blessing to many. With Christian regards to all friends, I am, ever yours,—WM. C. BURNS."

There fortunately exists also a Chinese account of these events, which is so curiously characteristic, that I am tempted here to reproduce it as a supplement to the missionary's own narrative. It is contained in the official statement addressed by Commissioner Yeh to the British consul Mr. Parkes in delivering up his prisoner to him, and gives us a vivid glimpse into the interior economy and life of that singular people.

"COMMISSIONER YEH TO CONSUL PARKES.

"*Translation.*

"Yeh, High Imperial Commissioner, Governor-General of the Two Kwang Provinces, &c., addresses this declaration to H. S. Parkes, Esq., Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Canton.

"I have before me an official report from Wang-Ching, Chief Magistrate of the district of Hae-yang, in the department of Chaon-chow, which contains the following statements:—

"It being the duty of your subordinate to act with Le-seuen-fang, the major commanding at this city (Chaon-chow), in the inspection of the defences of the place, we suddenly observed, whilst engaged in this service, three persons seated in a boat on the river whose appearance had something in it that was unusual. We found in their boat, and took possession of, seven volumes of foreign books, and three sheet tracts; but these were the only things they had with them. On examining the men themselves, we observed that they all of them had shaven heads, and wore their hair plaited in a queue, and were dressed in Chinese costume. The face of one of them, however, had rather a strange look; his speech in respect to tone and mode of expression being not very similar to that of the Chinese. We, therefore, interrogated him carefully, whereupon he stated to us that his true name was Pin-wei-lin (William Burns); that he was an Englishman, aged 42 years, and, as a teacher of the religion of Jesus, had been for some time past engaged in exhorting his fellow-men to do good deeds. In 1847 he left his native land and travelled to China, and took up his residence first at Victoria, where he lived two years, and afterwards in the foreign factories at Canton, where he remained for more than one. Subsequently, he visited Shanghae, Amoy, and other places, and there spent several years; wherever he went he made himself acquainted with the languages of the Chinese, and by this means he delivered his exhortations to the people, and explained to them the books of Jesus, but without receiving from any one the least remuneration. In 1854 he embarked in a steamer from Amoy, on a visit to his native home, and in December, 1855, joined himself to one of his countrymen, surnamed Tae, who was going to Shanghae to trade. 'I accompanied him thither,' said Burns, 'in his vessel; but

from Shanghae Tae returned home again, whilst I remained there and engaged myself in the distribution of Christian books. In the sixth month of the present year (July), I left Shanghae, and took passage in a foreign sailing vessel to Shantow (Swatow), in the district of Chinghae. There I fell in on the 12th day of the 7th month (August 12) with Le-a-yuen and Chin-a-seun, the two Chinese who have now been seized with me. I called upon them to be my guides, and we proceeded in company to Yen-fan, and from thence came on to this city, where we had it in contemplation to distribute some of our books. Scarcely, however, had we arrived at the river's bank on the 19th day of the 7th month (19th August), when to our surprise we found ourselves under surveillance, and deprived of our liberty. We entertained, however, no other views or intentions than those which we have stated, and declare that these statements are strictly true.'

"Such is the account given by the missionary, William Burns, who, together with his seven volumes of foreign books and his three sheet tracts, was given over into the charge of an officer, and brought in custody to this office.

"Having examined the above report, I (the imperial commissioner) have to observe thereon that the inland river of the city of Chaon-chow is not one of the ports open to (foreign) commerce; and it has never on that account been frequented by foreigners. I cannot but look upon it, therefore, as exceedingly improper that William Burns (admitting him to be an Englishman) should change his own dress, shave his head, and assuming the costume of the Chinese, penetrate into the interior in so irregular a manner. And although, when closely examined by the magistrate, he firmly maintained that religious teaching and the distribution of books formed his sole object and occupation, it may certainly be asked, why does William Burns leave Shanghae and come to Chaon-chow, just at a time when Kiang-nan and the other provinces are the scene of hostilities? Or, can it be that a person, dressed in the garb and speaking the language of

China, is really an Englishman, or may he not be falsely assuming that character to further some mischievous ends?

"I have directed Heu, the assistant Nan-hae magistrate, to hand him over to the consul of the said nation, in order that he may ascertain the truth respecting him, and keep him under restraint; and I hereby, by means of this declaration, make known to him (the consul) the above particulars.

"William Burns, seven volumes of foreign books, and three sheet tracts, accompany this declaration.

"*Heenfung, 6th year, 9th month, 2d day.* (September 30, 1856."

Another characteristic incident related by his friend and fellow-labourer, Dr. De la Porte, may be here introduced, as completing the history of these deeply interesting events:—

"When he was arrested in August, 1856, and brought before the chief magistrate of the Chaon-chow department, the magistrate required him to go down on both knees to be examined, as is the practice in China. Mr. B. very firmly but respectfully refused, saying that he would go down on one knee, as he would do to his sovereign, Queen Victoria; but that he would only go down on both knees to the King of kings. The magistrate was struck by this answer, solemnly and respectfully uttered, and allowed the missionary to be examined on one knee."

There were several circumstances connected with the time and position of affairs in which these events took place which rendered them peculiarly critical, and which led him ever after to regard their peaceful issue as a remarkable instance of the Lord's gracious leading and providential care. His arrest and confinement took place immediately on the eve of the hostilities which that year

broke out between the British and Chinese powers, and just before the commencement of those sanguinary proceedings on the part of Commissioner Yeh, which sent a thrill of horror throughout the civilized world. Had he arrived at Canton while these events were in progress, it is not difficult to see what the swift and terrible issue would have been! It will be remembered, too, that he had been, shortly before his arrival in this province, actually on his way to the head-quarters of the rebel army, on an unknown errand, to which the habitual jealousy of the Chinese authorities might easily have ascribed a sinister purpose. Alive to the danger of such misconstruction he had refrained at the time from giving even to his friends any account of that journey, which might afterwards find its way into the Shanghae papers, and thus lead to possible complications and interruption of his work, and it remained in consequence up to this hour totally unknown to the Chinese authorities. Had it been otherwise, and had any written trace of the journey and the inquiries connected with it existed on the records of any Chinese court, it would have been infallibly brought to light in connection with the inquiries consequent on the present arrest, and lent strong colour to the suspicion which his Chinese garb, coupled with his foreign look and accent, seemed to have awakened. "Had an account of the journey," he wrote afterwards (June 28th, 1858), "been published at the time in the Shanghae newspaper, as would probably have been the case had it not been interdicted, it is quite possible that the Chinese authorities in this quarter might have got some hint of the circum-

stance, when two years ago I was detained with two companions at the Foo city (Chaon-chow). It would in that case have seemed to them evident that I was a rebel in disguise, and the result can be but little doubtful. As the case stood, our countrymen in this neighbourhood knowing nothing of the said journey, none of the Chinese in their employ could even have it in their power to cast suspicion on us. I thought it also a special mercy that in neither of the examinations by the authorities at the Foo city was a single allusion made to the rebel party, nor any entangling questions put as to where I went and with what objects when journeying in the neighbourhood of Shanghae. Had such questions been put, then I might have seemed to be self-convicted of abetting the rebellion, and so have been summarily dealt with as an enemy of the government. The possibility of this was painted in painful colours to my mind when suffering from fever in my confinement, but from all these fears and dangers the Lord wonderfully delivered me. It would have been indeed a different thing to suffer as a supposed rebel, and to suffer 'as a Christian.' This latter privilege was given to my native companions when beaten on the face and imprisoned for months; from the former I was most graciously and completely saved."

Notwithstanding Dr. Bowring's friendly advice he was induced soon afterwards to return to Swatow, with the view especially of inquiring after his native brethren who were still in captivity at the Foo city. It was painful to him to find on his arrival there that they had been treated by the authorities with a cruel severity which they had

not dared to use towards a British subject; but at the same time he rejoiced greatly that they had been enabled to witness a good confession in behalf of Christ in the presence of their heathen adversaries. Beaten forty blows on the cheek with an instrument resembling the sole of a shoe, they adhered unflinchingly to their testimony to the truth and preciousness of the gospel, as the one only remedy for the ills of the soul, and returned to their prison only to pray and sing praises to God, and to labour daily for the salvation of their fellow-captives, one of whom, to their great joy, was in due time given them for their hire. At length, after four months' imprisonment, they were, at Mr. Burns' intercession, set at liberty.

Meanwhile he had received at Swatow an unexpectedly cordial welcome from those to whom he had before preached, "enjoying favour in the sight of rich and poor, the rulers and the ruled." He was enabled at last to effect a permanent settlement in the place, and to resume his interrupted labours under more favourable auspices, and with brighter prospects of success. Having engaged the valuable co-operation of a medical man of the Wesleyan denomination, Dr. De la Porte, then practising amongst the foreign shipping at Double Island, he was enabled to combine the beneficent ministries of a medical mission with his usual evangelistic operations, and thus more rapidly win his way to the confidence and regard of the native community. Two days of each week were regularly employed in connection with this work, when he acted as interpreter between the physician, as yet imperfectly acquainted with the language, and the patients, as

they came one by one to tell their case, while two native evangelists were engaged in another room, ministering the word of spiritual healing to the crowd of impotent folk who were waiting their time to be heard. About forty or fifty sufferers would thus be prescribed for in one day, while, at the same time, unnumbered seeds of saving truth were cast in faith upon the waters, to be found, it may be, after many days.

On December 4th, 1856, he writes to one of the earliest and warmest friends of the mission, in words of hopeful courage, which show too how his heart was encouraged and cheered in his distant field of labour, by the loving remembrance and help of brethren and children in the faith at home:—

"*Dec. 4th*, 1856.—MY DEAR MRS. BARBOUR,— . . . We thus have some encouragement in our present circumstances, as compared with the past; and were the spirit of grace and supplication granted to some of God's people in Scotland to plead on behalf of us and this people, it would be a sure token that the Lord had special blessings in store for this hitherto so neglected and desolate a part of this inhabited earth. I am glad to hear of such spontaneous offerings to aid us, as that £6 which you mention. I shall endeavour, when such are forwarded, to dispense them in the way that seems best for the advancing of the Lord's work. When I was in Scotland lately there were a number of small sums put into my hand, which I did not put into the public mission fund, and which I laid out in printing, at Shanghae and the neighbourhood, about 15,000 copies, in a sheet form, of one or two of Milne's *Village Sermons* (in Chinese). These I found very useful for distribution on certain occasions, when a number of larger tracts could not conveniently be carried. The first contributors to this small fund, or rather the founders of it,

were the children at M—— manse (Established), a little girl at the A—— Free Church manse, and another at a toll-bar to the north of that town. Some of the other sums were also from the north of Perthshire. I hope we have a few in that region, and in some other places, who pray for us and China's conversion to Christ. The harvest here is truly great, and how few the labourers are. May the Lord of the harvest send forth many more labourers, and especially from among China's own children."

Meanwhile the preaching of the word, on week-days and on Sabbath-days, both to the foreign visitors and to the native community, went on steadily and in perfect peace, notwithstanding the rumours of war between the Chinese and British powers then raging in their immediate neighbourhood. It seemed to him as if the passing events of that stirring drama were far better known, and excited a far livelier interest, amongst his friends at home than amongst those living within a hundred miles of the scene of action; and from first to last, the friendly relation in which he stood both to the authorities and to the people around him remained undisturbed. "A week or two ago," he writes, Jan. 30th, 1857, "the principal local authority in this place, when sick, invited Dr. De la Porte's medical assistance, and was very grateful for the aid thus given him; and we are on such friendly terms with the authorities here, that it was in the small fort in the town, and from the military officer in charge of it, that we the other day got the news of the progress of the war, which had just come by steamer from Hong-Kong. He passed as we were speaking to the people near the fort, listened with some interest, and then invited us to take

tea and converse with him, not only about the quarrel at Canton with the English, but about the gospel of Christ." Only by two incidents was he brought into closer and more personal contact with the political events then passing around him. The one was a proposal made to him in a very gratifying way by Lord Panmure, that he should undertake the office of chaplain to the British forces in that quarter, with the usual rank and salary of a major in the army. He respectfully but decidedly declined the appointment, chiefly on the ground that his connection with the invading army would be ever afterwards remembered by the Chinese, and thus leave upon him, as it were, an indelible stamp, most prejudicial to the success of the higher ministry to which he had devoted his life. Lord Panmure entirely appreciated the high motives by which he had been actuated, and replied in terms of Christian courtesy, which must have been most gratifying to him.

The other incident was the arrival of Lord Elgin at the port of Swatow, in the course of his important mission to the court of Peking, and is thus briefly alluded to by Mr. Burns:—"Lord Elgin in his way to the north called in at Swatow, about a month ago. I was invited to breakfast with him, on board H.M. steamship *Furious*, and had a full opportunity of expressing to him my convictions and feelings on various points—the coolie trade, opium, &c. He made particular inquiries in regard to the progress of the missionary work among this people, and also heard in detail the facts connected with my arrest, &c., in 1856." He ever afterwards retained the deepest respect for that

distinguished and esteemed nobleman, who afterwards, when Governor-general of India, corresponded with him in the kindliest manner, in regard to a matter in which he had occasion to ask his friendly intervention. It was no doubt in great measure in consequence of this visit, and the observations and inquiries then made, that we owe the fact that Swatow was, by the treaties then under consideration, added to the number of the free and open ports. The following letter to one of his sisters furnishes an additional reason for his prudent declinature of the chaplaincy, and gives at the same time one or two interesting glimpses of his occupations and mode of life at this time:—

"*Swatow, February 22d*, 1858.—MY DEAR SISTER,—I have to thank you for more than one letter which I have failed until now to acknowledge directly. You know that the use of the tongue is more natural to me than the use of the pen, and this must be my excuse. I am but poorly able to satisfy your inquiries about the people who, during last year, were about us at various times as applicants for medical aid. They were generally from places distant at least two or three days' journey, and of course unless they come again, we lose sight of them. In consequence of the uncertainty of Dr. De la Porte's continuance here, and other causes, the medical work was a month or two ago interrupted; and though it has been resumed, and is now carried on, patients have not yet begun to flow upon us in a stream, as was the case six months ago, when many of the poor people, both men and women, flocked to Swatow for medicine with almost the same zeal as they would resort to some famed idol's shrine. During the past few weeks I have been almost constantly resident, not at the Chinese town of Swatow (my proper station), but at Dr. De la Porte's (Double Island). I came down at first

for a change of air, but after getting the full benefit of this I am still for a little detained here by superintending some repairs and improvements in the Dr.'s house. I need to attend to this rather than he, not only because I understand the language, but because, in the view of his going to England, I consented to take his cottage, &c., from him, wishing to hold the situation in behalf of the mission cause generally as well as for present use. We have the workmen about us, and have some of them always with us at evening worship. Among other things, we are at present engaged, like the patriarchs, in digging a well, and as the position is rather elevated, we need to go deep in order to find 'springing water' such as Isaac found, Genesis xxvi. 19. You allude to the invitation given me to become chaplain to the Presbyterian soldiers in China. I have lately had a very kind acknowledgment from the War Office of my letter declining the appointment. As I had refused on grounds connected with my occupation as a missionary, Lord Panmure will not press the appointment on me. Unless the Lord in his providence should shut me up to such a course of acting, I feel more and more that I could not safely leave for a moment the position I occupy; and had I accepted the appointment, I would have found on the one hand at least, up to the present time, that the troops among whom I was expected to be, had gone to India instead of coming here, and on the other hand would have been in the greatest danger, from knowing Chinese, of being diverted from my proper work, and sinking down into a kind of interpreter about all and sundry matters. Mr. L——, whom you once wrote to me about after he had been in Glasgow, has lately got into a position somewhat of this kind. He is now at Canton assisting generally the provisional government established there by the English and French until matters are settled at Peking. He about a year ago disagreed somehow with the Chinese Evangelization Society, and became government school (Chinese) inspector in Hong-Kong, and

from the newspapers I have just seen that he is gone to Canton in the capacity I have mentioned. This is not the kind of work that would suit me, and I anticipated from the beginning, that had I become an army chaplain, it was work that I could have hardly avoided. I was surprised to see from the same paper which contained the notice of Mr. L——, that my friend and former fellow-labourer here, Mr. J. H. Taylor, has just been married at Ningpo to a daughter of a late missionary, Mr. Samuel Dyer. I am almost surprised at the question you put to me as to whether I have any near that can assist me in keeping my wardrobe in order. Formerly I had the kind missionaries' wives at Canton and Amoy, but now, where I have none such near, I happily am independent of such aid, wearing, as you seem to have forgot, the Chinese dress, which can be renewed or repaired everywhere. The only articles in which I still in part keep by the old attire are socks and flannel-shirts. The socks are hard to get repaired, but the native substitute answers very well. Indeed we need nothing here in addition to what we have but health of body—a mercy still continued to me—and our Lord's gracious presence and blessing in our souls and in our work. When there are ships here with English crews we have frequently public preaching on ship-board. Yesterday we had not this privilege, but I enjoyed much the season when in the forenoon Dr. De la Porte and I joined in English worship. The Saviour's promise is even to *two*, and I trust we enjoyed his presence. We long, however, to see his work prospering, and his kingdom established around us. Of this we have not as yet much evidence; but we are not discouraged. 'The kingdom is the Lord's: he is the governor among the nations,' and he hath promised that all nations shall yet be blessed in the Messiah, and all nations call him blessed. Happy those who are made God's instruments in helping on this consummation—first by through grace giving ourselves to the Lord, and then by prayer in the Spirit, or by active efforts, aiding to spread abroad the

savour of Christ's name. May such happiness be yours at home, and ours in this far land where our lot is at present cast! Pray for us, and seek for us the prayers of God's people. Remember me specially to Mrs. Davidson (formerly Miss Mylne) and ask her prayers for me and this people. Fraternal regards to Mr. Stewart, and my prayers for your infant son.—Your affectionate brother,—WM. C. BURNS."

The carpentry labours here referred to were only a recurrence to the occupations and acquired skill of former days, when as a boy he lifted up his axe upon the trees around the manse of Kilsyth. Now he found the change of scene and the bracing exercise of great advantage to him, "as tending powerfully to reinvigorate his physical powers, after being a good deal tired through a too confined position at Swatow." It spoke well for the solidity and workman like character of his work, that, as his friends afterwards remarked, in a terrible hurricane which shortly after passed over the district, sweeping away the entire shipping and demolishing a great part of the houses both at Swatow and Double Island, his was the only house amongst those in its vicinity which stood the blast. One other incident of a startling and solemn kind marked the period of his residence at Swatow. A terrible visitation of cholera passed, during several months, over the whole district of which it forms the centre, and created a wide-spread terror which brought out in a striking and affecting way the gross blindness and superstition of the people:—

"It is melancholy to see the means to which the people resort in order to free themselves from this dreadful visitation of God's hand. First, they had a procession of *lanterns*,

each house furnishing one or more large lanterns, with bearers for them. This was continued for three successive nights. Next they had a public procession, continued during the day and a great part of the night, with drums and gongs making a discordant noise to *drive away evil spirits from the streets;* this was accompanied too with plays and exhibitions of all sorts of finery, children on horseback, &c. Our doors or windows were shut, so that I can give no description of what I did not wish to see. Again the people went out in procession to a neighbouring field, and drew water to drink, a cupful of which was ordered as a recipe against the disease. These means having failed, for the last week or more all animal food, fish or flesh, has been forbidden. On one day no one was to wash clothes; and, to my surprise, on Monday, 19th, when I went up from Double Island, the town appeared like a forest of shipping, high flag-staffs being erected in all directions, formed of long bamboos, fixed the one above the other, and some as high as a ship's mast; to these are attached small flags; and at night small lanterns are suspended from them. In what way these things are expected to be beneficial I cannot ascertain. The only answer to be got is that they are ordered by their idols; and this brings out the most affecting feature of the whole. There are young lads who either really are possessed by evil spirits or feign to be so, and in a kind of raving madness give out what are looked upon as the oracular voice of the idol whom the people worship. There are two principal idols' temples in Swatow; and both of these idols have been in succession personated by these insane youths, by whom this blinded people are led! It is by such direction that all the foregoing remedies have been used to save them from cholera! Not one word is heard of the need of repentance, or of turning from any of the sins in which this people are lying, and in which they seem to go on with as unblushing boldness as before. How true that darkness covereth the earth and gross darkness the people! What need that He should arise and shine who is

the Light of the world! In the midst of such a people how weak and helpless does all mere human instrumentality appear, and what need have God's people to pray for us that in these circumstances our faith may not fail, and that we may not sit down in despondency, but still persevere in doing the work of the Lord among this people!"

One or two further extracts from his correspondence will complete the history of his labours here, which were marked by no other memorable event or important change, save only the gradual opening up of the field and the increasing interest and hopefulness of his work. His remarkable reception and hospitable treatment at the town of Tat-haw-poe is especially interesting, as an instance of the manner in which he often overcame difficulties by simply confronting them in the spirit of faith and prayer, and found favour in the sight of those from whom hostility and opposition only had been expected:—

"*March* 31*st*, 1857.—MY DEAR MOTHER,— . . . All things are going on as before in this place. We have outward peace, and an increasing attendance at our meetings, both ordinary and on the days when medical aid is given by Dr. De la Porte; but we need the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in *Swatow*, as in Kilsyth, to turn the souls of sinners from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. We need this, and this God has promised to prayer—true prayer. Who among us has the spirit of prayer! They are mighty who have this spirit, and weak who have it not. We need that the Lord would *prevent* us with his mercy, and quicken us when we are brought very low. Help us for the glory of thy name! Deliver us and purge away our sins. Come, Lord Jesus, and take unto thee thy great power and reign! Is there any special prayer among you for China? Perhaps in seeking the awakening and conversion of these

perishing millions a blessing may come down on your own borders as well as on us.

"Brethren, pray for us, pray without ceasing! I will conclude this note with Christian regards to all who love the Lord Jesus, especially among my own kindred. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, how dreadful the judgment recorded against him! Oh that all may have grace to flee that judgment and to love Him who is altogether lovely, who loved us and gave himself for us. Wishing grace and peace to my beloved parents,—I am ever your affectionate son,—W. C. BURNS.

"*P.S.*—Finished near midnight, entering on April 1st, 1857, the beginning of my forty-third year."

"*Swatow, June 3d*, 1857.— . . . Oh! that they were as anxious for the salvation of the soul as for the healing of the body. Alas! the gospel pool does not yet seem here to be visited by the angel to trouble the waters. All is sin and death around us."

"*Swatow, August 5th*, 1857.—Whatever change we can mark is in the way of progress. The medical work brings an increasing number of persons about us, to whom we seek to make known the truth, and gives us, in connection with our efforts to diffuse the truths of the gospel, a very favourable position in the eyes of the community. There is a district of country, Phoo-ning, at a distance varying from thirty to fifty English miles, from which we have had of late an unusual number of visitors, both men and women. They have taken lodgings near us for a succession of days, and not only have seemed to value the medical aid for which they came, but have very generally attended all our daily religious services, and have shown a more than common interest in our message. That district of country seems particularly afflicted with a species of leprosy, and some persons suffering from this and other diseases having received benefit, the poor people form parties and come out, at no inconsiderable trouble and expense to themselves. Those that come to us from this and other

quarters we generally make the bearers of tracts and Scriptures to their villages; and sometimes when we neglect to supply them, they apply of their own accord. . . .

"I am resuming my pen after being below at our usual evening worship. We had with us, from the opposite house where they are lodging, seven or eight sick persons who have come a distance of from thirty to forty miles for medical aid, and must wait until Friday, when Dr. De la Porte comes. These sick people come thus sometimes as many as thirty or forty at once; and while they are here, as well as merely on the patient-seeing days, they have a good opportunity of hearing the glorious gospel. A week or two ago a large party of women thus came, having hired a boat for themselves, and many of them seemed a good deal interested in our message. One old matron of seventy-three I was specially interested with. Staying opposite she was often below stairs. She came generally to worship, and by her serious and intelligent look one might hope that she understood something of what was taught her. One evening, after she retired from worship, I heard her, across the street, mentioning the Saviour's name, and she appeared to be attempting to pray.

"Have you any prayer-meeting now in which China is specially remembered? We need much prayer in our behalf, and in behalf of China at this time, *when new treaties may be made with foreign powers, either very favourable to the entrance of the gospel or the opposite.*"

"*Swatow, June 9th*, 1858.—MY DEAR MOTHER,—Dr. De la Porte is at last about to leave us. He was here seeing patients yesterday, as I suppose, for the last time, and to-morrow, if the Lord will, I go down to Double Island to see him away. He goes down to Hong-Kong in the expectation of finding a vessel in which to sail for England. It was affecting yesterday to join with him in prayer, probably for the last time, in a place where we have had so many meetings at the mercy-seat; and when he was gone, the thought that we should see him not again here caused a tender pang which

found relief only in looking up to Him who hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' We have already parted here with two of God's servants, Mr. Taylor two years ago, and now Dr. De la Porte. It has been by the Lord's special favour to this poor place and people that they were sent for a time to labour with us here, and now that they are being removed we trust that the same Lord has still chosen instruments in store whom he will send here, and support in doing his work among the poor heathen, and among countrymen more privileged but in many cases equally polluted and far more guilty. . . .

"Perhaps you have wondered that I have not alluded to the new dignity conferred on my beloved father.[1] I felt, when I heard of it, in a way that hindered me from at once noticing it, for while I was unwilling to seem to make light of it, I felt on the other hand how poor and insignificant it was compared with that dignity to which, I trust, my dear parents are daily expecting to be promoted—even the crown and the palm of the redeemed in glory—in the presence of God and of the Lamb. To this glory let us hasten, in that glorified company may we meet, to give praises to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb who bought us with his blood! The face of Christ in glory, as one says, is the glorified church's Bible, from which we shall learn in one day more of divinity than now by faith we attain by many years of study. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Make us like thee, and in thy time take us to be with thee, to behold thy glory which the Father hath given thee. 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and our Father, to Him be glory!' Continue to pray for me, dear parents, and seek an increase of prayer in behalf of this place and people, that the desert may be made to blossom, that the glory of Jehovah may be revealed, and all flesh see it together. Praying that my parents may be filled with the

[1] The degree of D.D., shortly before conferred on him.

fulness of God, through the knowledge of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, I am, dear parents, your affectionate son,—WM. C. BURNS."

"*Swatow, September 15th*, 1858.—Within the last month I am glad to be able to mention that we have obtained an additional standing-point for missionary labour, at the large town of Tat-haw-poe, distant about four or five miles from Double Island. I had often wished to visit this place, but delayed in consequence of being tied down, through the medical work, to Swatow, and being thus unable to follow up any favourable opening that might be given. Four weeks ago, after the assistants and I had specially sought the divine direction, we determined that two of them should go direct to Tat-haw-poe from Swatow, and that the following day, August 17th, one of them should join me at Double Island, and conduct me from there to Tat-haw-poe. He failed to come for me on the day appointed, and next morning came to say that, at Tat-haw-poe had just been posted up a Canton proclamation, warning the people from having anything to do with the English, and that it was a question I must myself decide whether I would venture to go or not. There was some reason to fear that no one would give me lodging, but I thought it my duty to go, and wonderful to say, just as we were about to conclude addressing the people, a man of respectability invited us into his hong, gave us a kind welcome, asked where I was to lodge, and when he found that there was but poor accommodation in the shop where my assistants were staying, he pressed us to come to him, leading me from room to room, and desiring me to take which one I preferred. Finally he put me into his own room, and one of the assistants into the adjoining; and there I remained for several days. Though passing the night in this gentleman's hong we continued to take our meals in the shop where the assistants had been lodging, until on Saturday morning, August 21st, the shopman informed us that his landlord had, on the previous night, given him notice, that he

must on no account admit foreigners into his shop, and that therefore I must cease to come. On this we went and made known the matter to our host, asking him whether he shared in the fears of this man. He made no account of the matter at all, and said that though, from the near approach of a Chinese term, he was a good deal occupied, and could not attend to us as he wished, if I would come again in a few days, he would give us an unoccupied part of his house to stay in as long as we liked.

"In this he was not deceiving us; for while I returned back to Double Island on that day, one of the assistants continued to remain in his house, and yesterday, September 14th, I returned from a second visit of six days, and have now a room waiting me whenever I am able to go."

But the work at Swatow, at least for the present, was now drawing to a close. The departure of Dr. De la Porte had greatly abridged his power of effectively occupying the field, and at the same time urgent invitations came to him from his brethren at Amoy, to return, at least for a season, to the scene of his former labours amongst the villages of Fokien. After much hesitation he consented, on the understanding that the Rev. George Smith, a young missionary of great devotedness and high promise, who had recently joined their number, should meanwhile, more or less permanently, take his place at Swatow. He had as yet reaped but little fruit of his labours in this field; he could not count one single decided convert from amongst all the multitudes to whom he had here declared the Word of life; but he had thoroughly broken up the ground, and plenteously sowed the seeds of a harvest, to be gathered in by those that should come after him, and enter into his labours.

He sailed for Amoy about the middle of October, 1858, and reached that place in safety a few days after. His next letter is, alike in its date and its subject-matter, deeply touching, and a brief extract from it will fitly close this chapter:—

"*Amoy, November 25th*, 1858.—I am sitting in the room formerly occupied by our dear and respected brother[1] and fellow-labourer who is now no more with us, but has, like his divine Master, left us an example that we should follow his steps, in order that we may overcome like him at last through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony! On the occasion of his so sudden removal from us, I felt unable in any suitable manner to write to any of his kindred, although I took the pen in hand more than once to do so. On coming up here four weeks ago, I went to see the spot where his mortal remains are laid. It is as yet marked by no monumental stone, but is side by side with the graves of not a few members, old and young, of the missionary circle, and with many of them we trust he will rise in glory at the Lord's coming. What a lesson to us, and to all! When little more than a year ago I visited Amoy, I had much sweet intercourse with him; and as the vessel that conveyed me back to Swatow left the harbour, he stood on the balcony above, and waved to me until we were out of sight. Now we may imagine him from a higher elevation, beckoning us to follow on in the Christian race, laying aside every weight, and running that we may reach the prize—the crown of life, which we believe has been already given to him by his Saviour and Lord."

[1] The devoted and greatly beloved David Sandeman, who died of cholera, at Amoy, July 31, 1858, and whose memory has been embalmed in an interesting biography by the Rev. A. A. Bonar.

CHAPTER XIX.

1858–63.

OLD SCENES AND NEW.

WHILE Mr. Burns was thus laboriously preparing the way for future labourers in the comparatively hard and unkindly soil around Swatow, his missionary brethren had been reaping a rich and almost continuous harvest at the parent station of Amoy. His young colleague, Mr. Douglas, had entered on his work at a most auspicious moment, and had abundantly shared in that blessing which for the last three years had so signally rested on that favoured field, and on all connected with it. The number of converts and of inquirers in connection with all the societies increased rapidly; the zeal, love, and hopeful faith, alike of missionaries and of native disciples, deepened; and the Word of the Lord sounded out more and more widely over the whole region round. The valleys of the hill country, on the mainland to the west, had become in particular one wide and busy harvest-field of souls. The sacred fire, kindled the year before at a single spot, spread gradually, chiefly through the spontaneous zeal of converts and native evangelists, to the towns and villages around, and one living church after another rose up as lights amid the darkness. Speedily the daughter

societies of Bay-pay and Chióh-bey rivalled alike in numbers and in fervour the mother congregation at Pechuia, while lesser groups of Christian worshippers were scattered here and there over the valleys and hills. In the absence of European labourers, or of trained native evangelists, the members of the infant churches themselves became the willing and zealous messengers of the Cross, and the Word of the Lord spread as by its own divine inherent might from village to village, and from heart to heart. Sometimes even it would be found that a single soul having heard the divine message, perhaps only once at some central mission station, had carried some living seeds of truth home to some sequestered village among the hills, and there alone, amid heathen idolaters, by feeble prayers to the true God, and rude endeavours to keep the Christian Sabbath, nursed the sacred germ, until some Christian evangelist came to water and to foster it. The aspect of the scene, as it presented itself to the young missionary on his first survey of the field, was thus exceedingly exhilarating. "A glorious work of God," said he (Jan. 3, 1856), "has been wrought in this place, and He is working still, and by his dealings we seem warranted to expect that all this is but the merest beginning of the abundant blessing that he is about to bestow on this place and neighbourhood. For several years after this port was opened the labours seemed almost in vain, and when about seven years ago the drops began to fall, they were very very few; but somewhat about two years ago, the conversions became more numerous, and now the number of living adult members is—London Missionary Society,

here and at Ko-lang-soo, 150; American Mission here, 100; at Chióh-bey, 22; and our station at Pechuia, 25. Of these the London Society has 39 female members, and the Americans about the same number. You can now judge by what I have said as to the past and the present; while as to the future, our hopes rest, under the mercy and love of God, on various reasons,—partly the zeal and prayerfulness stirred up at home, partly on the singularly steady progress and continued proportional increase of the converting work, which is also peculiarly free from any excesses of enthusiasm or superstition; and very much on the fact that the converts, almost all, are full of zeal to lead their relatives and friends to become partakers of the like precious faith, and to instruct in the Scriptures and 'the doctrine' those who are younger in Christ; they seem, so far as I can see, to delight to tell those who are still without, of the grace and peace which they have found.

"There are altogether fifteen native Christians employed as colporteurs and evangelists by the various missions; these assist in conducting the services in the chapels, and quite as often conduct them themselves; they also go out into the streets, and the neighbouring villages and towns, distributing tracts and Testaments, preaching and conversing with the people. Though of course I am not yet able to assist them in this work, I often accompany them. There are also several young men under training for this work by the several missionaries, who occasionally go out to help; and there are also several persons engaged in ordinary business, who delight to take part from time to

time in these evangelistic labours. Oh, that Christians at home would go and do likewise—go everywhere, in streets, and lanes, and villages preaching the Word, and the Lord would certainly be with them, and his power be present to heal."

When about a year after his arrival the missionary was able himself to preach in the Chinese language, the evangelistic work went on still more vigorously. From the wise and judicious director, he became now the energetic leader of the company of preachers, traversing in every direction the whole region round Amoy, till there was scarcely one important centre of population on either side of the Chang-chow estuary in which the joyful sound had not been heard. Old stations flourished, and new fields opened up, which seemed scarcely less ripe for the harvest. Seldom did a month pass in which there were not in some of the churches inquirers to be instructed, and converts to be baptized; while the old members, for the most part, visibly grew in faith, in knowledge, and in Christian activity and zeal. A numerous "school of the prophets," too, for the training of native evangelists and teachers, flourished under the missionary's own care, at the central station at Amoy, and held out the prospect of still more active and extensive operations in the time to come.

It was indeed a green spot, which attracted the eye even of the passing traveller, as a "field which the Lord had blessed." An interesting testimony of this kind, which came unsought from an unexpected quarter, I cannot help quoting. A writer in the *Overland Chinese Mail*, who signs himself "Ornithologicus," had set out with a fellow-

sportsman from Amoy towards some point on the mainland. Their boat was capsized by a squall, and they were taken up by a junk which was bearing towards the mouth of the Pechuia river. The boatmen would not return with them to Amoy; but showed them much kindness, taking off their own garments, and insisting upon them putting them on, to prevent their getting chilled. The rest must be told in the writer's own words:—

"Running with a fair breeze, in the course of an hour or so we reached Pechuia, and were led by the boatmen, amidst the cheers of the small boys, to the missionary chapel. Our guides conducted us through the Chinese chapel, up a ladder to a room above, where a teacher was instructing a class of boys. The learned man, when he first saw us in our dirty dress, and a mob crushing in at our heels, felt annoyed; but as soon as he heard that we were peaceful inhabitants of Amoy, who had met with an accident while on a boat trip, his countenance immediately assumed a bland expression, and he invited us into his room, and made us recount to him as well as we could our accident, while he sent to have our clothes dried. Several converts came to have a look at us, and amongst them an old respectable-looking man, who was somewhat deaf; and when the rest explained to him what had occurred, he turned to us and said, in a serious tone, 'You ought indeed to be thankful to the Almighty for having spared you from a watery grave!' After we had chatted some time with our visitors, we were shown into a small private room, with a table, a couch, and a couple of bamboo chairs. This we were told was the missionary's private apartment whilst he taught amongst them. On the table was laid a dinner, half Chinese and half English, and we were left alone to dress and enjoy our meal. Our long subjection to moistening influences had given us extraordinary appetites, and we did our duty well to the good things set before us. Before it grew

dark we expressed a desire to go for a walk, and were led through the village to a secluded path by the river's side. The streets have not much to recommend them, but the country was green and pretty, and quite a pleasant change from the barren hills of Amoy.

"On our return to the missionary dwelling, we had a cup of tea, and then a gong was beaten, and some of the converts came in to ask us if we would attend evening worship. We of course implied a willing assent, and stepping into the hall, found a company of about twenty gathered round a table with books before them; two seats were left vacant for us at the bottom of the table, which we took possession of. The teacher at the head of the table began the service by giving out a hymn, which was sung by the company under his precentorship. The Bible was then opened, and each one read a verse of the chapter in his turn; an explication of the chapter followed, after which all fell on their knees while the good man prayed. My knowledge of the local dialect is not very great, but I knew enough to understand that he returned thanks for our deliverance from a watery death, and also that he prayed for the safe passage of their pastor, who had left them for a visit to the north.[1] We were exceedingly pleased with all we witnessed, and came to the conclusion that the only answer we could in future return to the cavillers at the progress of Christianity in China would be that we only wished that half the Christian assemblies we have been present at at home could evince a portion of the sincere and true devotion in worship of the small body of converts in Pechuia. What the heart is, it is impossible for man to know, unless he judges from the external demeanour.

"As soon as the service was over we retired to our small room, and being very anxious to return to Amoy, we inquired whether we could not hire a boat to take us back. The owner of a boat was summoned, and he agreed to start as soon as the tide turned, which would not be till midnight.

[1] The Rev. Mr. Douglas, then on a visit at Shanghae.

"We talked with the people that came to see us, and smoked incessantly to pass the time away. Midnight seemed a long time approaching; at last, to our intense relief, we were told that the boat was ready, and were lighted through the streets to the river side, many of our friends following to take leave of us as we embarked."

But this bright picture had also its darker shadow. "It is impossible but that offences shall come." Tares will ever mingle with the wheat even in the richest and fairest fields of the Church, and the infant churches of Fokien were no exceptions to this universal rule. The mother congregation at Pechuia, in particular, had become latterly the subject of grave solicitude to the missionaries. Dissensions had arisen about the building of a chapel; one or two cases of scandal had occurred amongst the members; death and change had of late visibly thinned the ranks of the little society, while few new disciples were rising up to fill the vacant places. It seemed indeed as if the fresh spirit of life, under which at first they had grown exceedingly, at once in numbers and in fervour, had passed away, and that the work had become stationary, or even retrograde. It was in these circumstances that Mr. Burns had been urged by his brother missionary to return, at least for a season, to the scene of his former labours, and to bear his share of the increasing anxieties and responsibility of their common work.

On his arrival at Pechuia he found the evils of which he had heard less serious than he had feared, but still sufficiently grave to call for prompt and vigorous corrective measures. On Feb. 22d, 1859, he writes from Amoy:—"There are two persons there who have fallen away from

their Christian profession; but neither of them had from the beginning, as far as I learn, any marked evidence of a work of grace. The only really melancholy case that I know of, is one who was chapel-keeper, and afterwards a preacher, but who, there is reason to fear, has again fallen under the power of opium-smoking." The general aspect of affairs, however, as it presented itself to him after so long an absence, was on the whole most cheering. "I wonder," says he, "more than ever I did at the reality and preciousness of the work of the divine Spirit at Pechuia and the neighbouring stations. May the time be near when new and like glorious manifestations of the Lord's saving power shall be witnessed in this and in all lands! . . . Yesterday we had about forty of the converts in this neighbourhood assembled at the communion at Pechuia; and to-day, in coming here, fully a dozen accompanied me, most of them returning home. It was a sweet contrast with the state of things five years ago, when we first visited Pechuia, and when in this whole neighbourhood there was probably not a single follower of the Lamb. 'These, where had they been?' These from the land of Sinim! Oh! glorious day, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be converted unto Emmanuel; when all nations shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call him blessed! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Take unto thee thy great power and reign."

Two of the offending members were, after all gentler means of remedy had been tried in vain, cut off from communion, while two others were subjected to the faithful but loving discipline of the Church, with a view to their

repentance and restoration. Remedial measures, too, of a more permanent kind were at the same time adopted. A regular body of office-bearers, according to the Presbyterian model, was constituted at Pechuia, as had been already done at Amoy and Chióh-bey; the whole proceedings of the election being conducted in a most orderly manner, in an assembly of the native church itself. Another measure not less memorable originated with the native brethren themselves, and is in its whole circumstances and history deeply touching. "A fortnight ago," writes Mr. Burns, "at the instance of one of the elders at Chióh-bey (who is one of the Pechuia converts, and was one of the chief founders, as he *is* one of the pillars of the Chióh-bey church), the Pechuia, in concert with the Chióh-bey church, observed a season of solemn prayer and fasting, that they might seek the return of the Lord's favour to Pechuia. I was at Chióh-bey when this season was observed—Tuesday, the 16th of August. There was a large attendance of church members, *and when the elder I have alluded to, I-ju, began to pray, he was so affected that he could hardly proceed.* The preacher at Chióh-bey, Tow-lo, who began his work as a preacher at Pechuia in 1854, *was also sobbing aloud.* It was evident that the Lord was in the midst of us."

It is not strange surely that such offences should be found in the infant churches in heathen lands, as are never wanting in the purest and holiest flocks in Christendom. "It is well," said Dr. Hamilton, in his report of this year, "to bear in remembrance the many difficulties to which converts in such a country are subjected, from

past habits and surrounding influences. Weak in faith and experience, they are as sheep in the midst of wolves. In our intercessions let us not forget those churches, which, like the lily amongst thorns, are planted in the heart of heathendom." They themselves had long since said, in that touching letter to their absent pastor and father in the faith:—"You know that our faith is weak and in danger. . . . We have heard the gospel but a few months; our faith is not yet firm. . . . We are like sheep that have lost their shepherd, or an infant that has lost its milk."[1]

The evils which had been thus the cause of such bitter sorrow to all, were yet in the end overruled for good. The little church came forth from the ordeal purified, braced, and strengthened; with numbers somewhat reduced, but with a deeper and humbler faith, and with a tried and disciplined steadfastness. The shaking of the tree had only fastened the roots the more. The barren branches had been taken away, and the fruitful "purged," that they might bring forth more fruit. "During these months," says one of the missionaries, "a singular blessing has rested on efforts made to remove the evils which were pressing upon us. . . . Fact after fact has come to light, manifesting those who were not approved, and most unexpected light has been thrown on what, if undiscovered, would have continued to infest the Church, and hinder the work amongst us."[2]

Another event of the deepest interest occurred this year, which is so strikingly illustrative of the whole char-

[1] Pp. 422-423. [2] Letter from Mr. Grant, 8th Oct., 1859.

acter of the mission, and of the infant churches to which it has given birth, that I shall relate the circumstances at length in the words of one of the missionaries. "Last month," says Mr. Douglas, "a step in advance was taken by the Amoy church, which seems to me most important, and the most cheering which has been taken since that church was organized. It was the setting apart of two native evangelists, *entirely supported by the native church in Amoy*, under the care of the American missionaries.

"The novelty and cheering interest of this step does not lie in the use of native evangelists. These have long been employed, and found quite indispensable in the instruction and extension of the Church. But the singular interest of what has just been begun is, that these two native evangelists are as completely independent of foreign money, as the ministers of Canada [or Australia. Of course the church itself is still dependent for instruction on the foreign missionaries, and on agents paid by them; but in the case of these two new evangelists, a beginning has been made of the self-supporting principle.

"It was after abundant prayer and careful counting of the cost, that this work was begun. The choice of the two brethren honoured by the Master to undertake this office was quite independent of the missionaries, the names being only submitted for approval or rejection after the choice, before the setting apart. On that day the native members of the other church at Amoy, that, namely, under the care of the London Missionary Society, were invited to be present. Almost all the missionaries of the several societies were there. And already both

that church and the younger churches on the mainland are considering whether they be able to follow the example so well set to them.

"The field chosen for these new labourers is the unevangelized portion of the island of Amoy, which is just the whole island (about thirty miles in circumference), except the town itself. How wonderful and glorious the ways of God! While he is opening up our way to the towns and cities at a greater distance around, he is taking care that the populous villages of the immediate neighbourhood be not neglected."

Amid these interesting and fruitful pastoral cares, the more extended and aggressive work of the mission went on vigorously—the missionaries "using the 'Gospel Boat' as their home in going from place to place in evangelistic work, for which the rivers of China afford so great facility." Another attempt was made to effect a permanent lodgment within the walls of the great city of Chang-chow,[1] but was for the time defeated in consequence of a singular incident. "A week ago," writes Mr. Burns, "we were living near the district magistrate's office. He had gone out about midnight, on Sabbath the 13th, to inspect the streets, and just as he was passing our lodging, one of the assistants, when the other had gone to rest, suddenly, in the fulness of his heart, began aloud to sing a Christian hymn. The unusual sound attracted the mandarin; he listened, and hearing that a foreigner was there, he next day sent to ask us to leave the city." In another direction, however, some hopeful tokens had begun to appear

[1] See pp. 395, 396.

in places to which Mr. Douglas' eye had been long and anxiously turned. At Anhai, a town of about 30,000 or 40,000 inhabitants, situated at the head of a long inlet, about thirty-five miles north-east from Amoy, an opening had been found for the truth, which soon led to the establishment of a regular mission station, and to the foundation of one of the most numerous and fruitful of the Chinese native churches.

It was in the midst of these interesting and congenial labours that Mr. Burns received the following touching lines from his early friend, James Hamilton, which I am tempted to insert as a fragrant memorial both of the writer himself and of that gracious and benignant friend whose character he embalms:—

"48 *Euston Square, London, N.W., May 10th*, 1859.—MY DEAR FRIEND,—Two hours ago I received a notification of what will doubtless be communicated to you in fuller detail from home—the entrance into his everlasting rest of your beloved father, on the morning of Sabbath last. It was only a few weeks after his retirement from his ministerial work; so that the heavenly Sabbath has followed sooner than he hoped. It has been a wonderfully serene and blameless life, and in the remarkable visitation of his people twenty years ago he has been a rarely happy minister. The announcement has sent my own thoughts back to Kilsyth and Strathblane, and to incidents that transpired 'full many years agone.' To you in your far place of sojourn the tidings will be very affecting. It is touching to think that you will see his face no more; but oh! how blessed is his own case, who now sees Jesus face to face, and who from a life of prayer has passed to one of praise.

"Last January I saw him and your dear mother in Glasgow; they had come in to attend the meeting on behalf of China in Free St. Matthew's (Dr. S. Miller's). Your father seemed to

me very much the same as ever. He sat on a chair which was placed for him beside the pulpit, and the congregation evidently eyed him with much reverence and affection.

"'The fathers, where are they?' I often feel it solemn now to know that we are getting into the fore-front; no generation any longer between ourselves and the great reckoning.

. . . . . .

"With love to all the brethren, I remain, affectionately yours, JAMES HAMILTON."

In October, 1859, Mr. Burns was again on his way towards a new and distant sphere of labour. The special service for which he had come to Fokien, and for which the peculiar relation in which he stood to the inland churches there gave him a special advantage, had been satisfactorily accomplished, and now he longed to return to his old work of pioneering the way of other labourers in regions where the gospel had not yet found an entrance. The nearest and most natural centre of operations was Fuh-chow—the capital city of the province to which Amoy belongs, and here accordingly he spent most of the next year—quickly acquiring the new dialect, preparing a hymn-book for the use of the infant church, and unweariedly sowing, as usual, the gospel-seed. Of these labours the following notices have been kindly furnished to me by esteemed brethren connected with other sections of the Christian Church.

"When Mr. Burns," says the Rev. C. Hartwell, one of the oldest missionaries of the American Board at Fuh-chow, "first came to Fuh-chow in October, 1859, he divided his labours between preaching in English and studying and preaching in Chinese. He spent his Sabbaths at the

'Pagoda Anchorage,'[1] preaching on ship-board to seamen and others who came to his services. The week-days he spent at Fuh-chow, studying the spoken dialect, and for a short time preaching two evenings in a week in the Amoy dialect, to the tin-foil beaters and others from the Amoy region living here, who were induced by special invitation to attend his services in our church.

"Of his labours at the 'Anchorage,' I frequently heard him speak, as he made his home with me for the first two months of his stay here. A few Scotch ship-masters also called on him at my house, but I remember no facts of especial interest connected with his labours among the shipping.

"As his congregations of hearers in the Amoy dialect soon became small, he ceased from his efforts in that direction, and devoted himself exclusively to learning the Fuh-chow language, and labouring for the Fuh-chow people. Having an accurate knowledge of the written language,[2] and a great facility in acquiring the spoken dialects, he was soon able to do something in connection with the native helpers employed by the Mission of the American Board, and the American Methodist Mission.

"Besides attending the services of other missionaries,

[1] "Pagoda Anchorage" is the place where large ships lie, about twelve miles below the city; it is so called from a pagoda on "Pagoda Island."

[2] "The written language" may perhaps not give a clear idea; what is meant is the *literary style*, in which books are composed, and which is equally current through the whole empire; of course it is quite different from the colloquial of any place, and only well-educated persons can understand it.

he himself held others in our churches, in which at first the native helpers did the preaching, he simply directing the exercises, and occasionally suggesting points to them upon which he wished them to speak. He was quite successful in this mode of effort, and the helpers as well as others were benefited by the meetings.

"As his ability to use the local dialect increased, he gradually did more preaching himself at his services. His labours at first were mostly at Nan-tai,[1] where churches had been built and good accommodations for preaching secured. Afterwards, as the missionaries within the city, from want of chapels, at that time were forced to labour a good deal in the streets, he began to accompany them in their labours in street-preaching, and also engaged in such efforts himself in connection with native assistants.

"He also assisted us by visiting some of our out-stations in the country, and labouring in these places. One of our present out-stations was commenced by him. We had opened a chapel some miles back of the place in a smaller village, but had been unable to secure one in this large village until his effort was successful. He laboured at this place for some time, and several persons manifested some interest in the truth, but none of them have yet given evidence of piety. When he left Fuh-chow the last time, he gave funds to employ an extra helper for this

[1] Nan-tai, the suburb of Fuh-chow, on the river, where all the foreign hongs and mercantile and consular residences stand. The mission houses, and some of the mission chapels of the *American Methodist Mission*, are also there. The city proper (the walled part) lies about three miles north of the river, the suburb stretching the whole way, though most dense on the river side.

village for some time, and the out-station has been fully manned by us ever since; but, for unknown reasons, it has hitherto proved our least successful field of labour.

"Not desiring to open a new mission at Fuh-chow, during his stay here, Mr. Burns sought to aid each of the three missions already established, as opportunity offered and occasion seemed to require. He did not confine his assistance to any one of them. He sought for openings where he could be useful in promoting the work generally, and in this he was very successful. His catholicity of feeling made him ever ready to aid at any weak point.

"The particulars in which, as it seems to me, he most aided our mission—and in fact the others also—were his excellent influence upon our native assistants, and in successfully introducing the use of colloquial hymns among us in our worship.

"Our helpers soon learned to feel a great regard for Mr. Burns, and their piety was quickened and deepened apparently through his influence. His power over them arose from his own deep piety; his accurate knowledge of the Chinese language; the great fund of Christian knowledge at his command; and the singleness of purpose which he ever manifested. We felt it to be a privilege to have our native preachers under his influence and instruction.

"Previous to his coming among us all our hymns used in worship had been in the written language, as had been the case elsewhere generally in China. His attempt, though not the only one, was the first which was successful in introducing the use of colloquial hymns for this

purpose. With the aid of native preachers he prepared some of the hymns used at Amoy and Swatow, in the spoken dialect of Fuh-chow. These he first printed in sheet form, and used them in street-preaching and chapel-preaching, till he was convinced that they were in a good colloquial style, and then he published them as amended in a book form, and they soon came into general use among us. He showed his usual enthusiasm in introducing his hymns, and the force of his character had much weight in overcoming the prejudices of our better educated Christians to the general use of colloquial hymns. Our hymn-book has been much enlarged, but the hymns prepared by Mr. Burns are still general favourites. His influence for good here, doubtless, will be perpetuated for a long time to come through the use of these hymns.

"I think of nothing else that would be of especial interest to mention. He was a good man, did good wherever he was, and has gone to his reward. The savour of his name is still fragrant at Fuh-chow."

"He came to Fuh-chow," writes the Rev. Dr. M'Lay, of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, "shortly after we had gathered in the first-fruits of the harvest in this field, and the effect of his example and his teachings on the native Christians was most salutary. He was eminently a man of prayer, and this feature of his character, as also his love for God's Word, operated beneficially on the native church. His thorough consecration to the work of an evangelist, and his steady perseverance in it, produced a powerful impression upon all with whom he came in contact. He was also very useful in training the

native churches in the use of holy song; and the hymns prepared under his direction are still found in the hymn-books used by the native churches of this city and its vicinity. There were not many converts added to the societies under the care of our mission during the time Mr. Burns was in Fuh-chow. *It would appear that he aimed chiefly at the edification of the native church*, and in this department he did a good work. The memory of Mr. Burns is very tenderly cherished by those who became acquainted with him during his residence in Fuh-chow, and among all the native Christians his name is as ointment poured forth."

In September of the next year (1860) he returned to the neighbourhood of Amoy, in consequence of some trying circumstances to which we shall have presently to refer in greater detail; and then, after only a brief stay, passed on to his old home at Swatow, where he found to his joy that the wilderness which he had left so short a time before had begun in a remarkable manner to blossom, under the able and devoted labours of his successor, Mr. Smith. The day after his arrival he preached to the natives, and the change for the better that had come over the people in their desire to hear the gospel since his first visit, five years previously, affected him almost to tears on the occasion. Here also he compiled a hymn-book in the colloquial dialect, which proved a precious boon to the young converts.[1]

He returned to Fuh-chow in the course of the next year, and continued his labours there for some months

[1] *Narrative, &c.*, p. 60.

longer. But, meanwhile, events had occurred in the neighbourhood of Amoy which required his presence there for a more lengthened period, and which ultimately led to his removal to the capital city of Peking.

Allusion has already been made more than once to the fiery trial to which these infant churches have been almost continually exposed through the bitter opposition and hostility of their heathen fellow-countrymen. The political jealousy of the ruling class, and the religious rancour of the people, united in common antipathy to the professors of a strange and alien faith. The mandarins suspected the foreign creed; the multitude hated the singular and exclusive worship. To the philosophic Confucian they were obnoxious as fanatics; to the superstitious devotee as enemies of the gods and despisers of the ancestral rites. Hence a general and constant sentiment of mingled suspicion, dislike, and fear, which was ever in danger, on the least provocation, of breaking out into open acts of hostility and lawless violence. They were seldom, indeed, called to witness for their divine Master unto blood; never, perhaps, except when some terrible misconception might involve the Christian evangelist in supposed complicity with the schemes of traitors and rebels; but short of this there was scarcely any extreme of hardship and suffering to which they might not be subjected. Their houses were spoiled. Their property was destroyed. Their rice-fields were laid waste. Their cattle were driven away. Their pine-trees were cut down. They were refused the use of the public wells. Their supply of labourers was cut off by hostile combination in

time of harvest. Their places of worship were rudely assailed, and their sacred assemblies interrupted, without hope of protection or redress from any native authority. One or two instances of this petty but vexatious persecution may be given from the letters of the missionaries. Thus one of the members of the Bay-pay church, of the name of Wat, had been called upon to pay the accustomed tribute in support of the idolatrous ceremonies at one of the great feasts. He refused. Forthwith he was denied water from the public well, and his son was beaten in attempting to fetch it. Then they cut down a large number of his pine-trees, which formed a considerable portion of his property; and as he appealed for redress in vain, they proceeded next to cut down his fruit-trees. Other members of the same church had their rice-fields and other property plundered, and at one time three of the female candidates for baptism were severely beaten by their relatives. At Yam-tsai, in the Swatow district, one poor widow had her house plundered on the Lord's-day when she was at church; another member had his field of sugar-cane destroyed; a third had his fowls stolen; and all were constantly exposed to the scoffs and reproaches of their fellow-villagers, and the unbelieving members of their own families. Sometimes the malicious designs of the adversary were defeated in singular ways, or signally overruled for good. One day the police entered the premises of the old cloth merchant at Pechuia, intending to plunder or perhaps to seize him. Being rather deaf, he did not hear their demand, but he said, "O yes; I know what you have come for," and taking

down some of his goods, and pointing to the rest, he said, "Take them, take them all, and I'll go with you, too; but I am old and rather deaf; take my boys, too, and my little girl there. We are all Christians, we are not afraid; we will go with you." The men, astonished at this novel reception, left the premises without injuring any of the inmates, or touching an article of their property. While one was thus preserved by his own simple and unworldly faith, another was succoured by the brotherly love of his fellow-disciples. An old farmer, who resided about five miles from Khi-boey, a village in the same district, having become a Christian, his heathen neighbours evinced their bitter dislike by refusing at harvest time to give him the least assistance in reaping his rice-fields. On hearing of the old man's trouble, the brethren at Khi-boey at once resolved to go to his help; a band of them started one evening for the farm, and commencing operations early next morning, they worked so heartily that the fields were all reaped in one day, to the surprise of the neighbours, and to the comfort and relief of their brother in distress. Such trials as these had fallen of late with peculiar severity on some of the village churches in the Pechuia district, and called for some vigorous intervention in their behalf on the part of their spiritual overseers. The case of Bay-pay has been already incidentally alluded to. More recently at Khi-boey, a village about twenty miles to the south-west of Pechuia, where an interesting and prosperous church had been recently established, the disciples had been called to pass, while yet, as it were, in their very infancy, through a great fight of affliction. "On

hearing of the disturbances, Mr. Swanson at once repaired to Khi-boey, and was gratified to find that though the persecution still raged, the converts were keeping firm and hopeful, and that fourteen of them were in a state of preparedness for baptism. No house could be had for divine service, and they had to gather under the shade of a magnificent lung-yen tree. The persecution ceased for a time, but the missionaries were soon again summoned to interpose in their behalf. Chioh, in whose house the Christians had been in the habit of assembling, was driven from his home, and on his attempting to take refuge in the house of another Christian, the roof was broken in by a mob, and Chioh prevented from entering. His widowed sister was then attacked, and her son threatened with death unless they complied with their demand for money; a sword was brandished over the lad's head, while they required that he should cease to worship God. This he resolutely refused, declaring himself ready to die rather than renounce his faith. Chioh and another went down to Amoy for advice, and Mr. Burns at once returned with them to see what could be done. While he was attempting to pacify the enraged villagers, one of the converts was set upon by a number of men armed with bludgeons and pikes, and severely beaten, and might have been killed, but for his timely intervention."

No one assuredly was ever in a better position to interfere in such a case than one who for so many years, and amid all his wanderings amongst this heathen people, had so simply and wholly cast himself on the care of his divine Master, and had never in any single instance invoked the

succour of the secular arm in his own defence. The rights which he had never sought to enforce in his own behalf he could the more boldly and freely, and with the greater effect, plead in behalf of others. Ever ready himself to suffer, he was prompt to hold his protecting shield over those who were less able to suffer than he. He spoke accordingly in their behalf with a resolute force and decision which, in dealing with secular matters, was not usual with him. A formal representation was made to the Chinese authorities, through the British consul, who himself took up the case very cordially, and threatened that, if immediate justice were not done, he would report the case to Peking. This produced the desired result. It was promised that the stolen property should be restored, and money given in compensation for property destroyed. But the Christians, before consenting to this offer, preferred consulting Mr. Burns at Amoy, who at once came again to their aid, and obtained from the magistrates the following terms:—

(1.) Restoration, so far as possible, of the very articles stolen;

(2.) A bond from the enemies to guarantee their non-interference with the Christians; and

(3.) A proclamation to be issued, exhorting the people not to interfere with the Christians.

"Most happily all this was agreed to, and the enemies seeing the turn matters were taking, and fearing the violence of their own authorities, prayed for the interposition of the missionaries in their behalf. Mr. Burns gladly used his influence accordingly, and thus all ended well. The

stolen property was restored in presence of the mandarins, Mr. Burns, and an immense concourse of people. The poor Christians carried their pigs, and led back their oxen to the homes from which they had so lately been driven, rejoicing, and yet we hope humble. On the same day the enemies entered into a bond not to interfere with those who were, or might become Christians, and not to annoy them in any way. In a few days after, the mandarins issued a proclamation, intimating that the case was now settled, and strictly forbidding all persons from interfering with any one 'who may enter the holy religion of Jesus.' Not the least remarkable feature in the termination of these disturbances was, that the enemies looked upon the missionaries as their best friends, for having shielded them from the severity of the mandarins."[1]

Thus for once, and in behalf of Christ's "little ones," had "the Man of the Book" sustained the character of the vigorous, sagacious, and successful diplomatist. The storm for the present passed away. Then for a season had the churches rest throughout the towns and villages of Fokien. But the permanent relations of the native Christians towards their heathen countrymen were still in a very uncertain and precarious state, and it was thought important that Mr. Burns should proceed to Peking, with the view of obtaining a personal interview with Sir Frederick Bruce, and thus, if possible, effecting a more secure and satisfactory settlement. He left Amoy accordingly, and arrived at the capital, in October, 1863, thus entering on the last period of his missionary career.

[1] *Narrative, &c.*, p. 40, 41.

CHAPTER XX.

1863–68.

PEKING AND NIEU-CHWANG.

IN tracing the last footsteps of my lamented brother at Peking and Nieu-chwang, I have been happily furnished with such ample materials from the hands of loving brethren of different Christian communions, that it will scarcely be necessary for me to do aught more than simply to quote their tender and graphic words. Some of these communications have come so spontaneously, and from quarters to me so unexpected, that it has seemed but as the breathing fragrance of precious ointment, which *must* flow forth, and which cannot be hid, when the alabaster box is broken. To this part of our narrative the following vivid and interesting notices, from the pen of S. Wells Williams, LL.D., Secretary of the United States Legation at Peking, will form a peculiarly appropriate introduction—all the more so that they are in part retrospective, touching the missionary's career at various points, where the paths of the two friends crossed one another during the course of twenty years:—

"When I recall," says this distinguished scholar and missionary, "the voice and form of Mr. Burns, they revive my earliest notions of one of the old Hebrew prophets, of a man

whose high vocation had somewhat separated him from common communion with those around him; this idea impressed itself so much upon my mind when I first met him in Hong-Kong, in Sept. 1848, that it always invested his character and name, and does so even more now that he has gone. Our intercourse was of the most cordial nature; but being a printer, and having no work with him, I was not so much thrown into his company as he was with Dr. Hobson at Canton, Mr. Doty at Amoy, and others who had chapels where he could preach. I have therefore not so many recollections of Mr. Burns as might be inferred from an acquaintance of twenty years, and have not preserved a single line of his writing.

"His determination and singleness of purpose in the mission work were illustrated in his account of the way he began the study of the language on his voyage to China. The only book which he could find in London to aid him in this study was my *English and Chinese Vocabulary;* with this he procured a volume of Matthew's Gospel, and perhaps a tract or two. He then examined the first verses of the 2d chapter, learned the figures so as to distinguish the verses, and taking the first characters, hunted through the Vocabulary till he found them as the Chinese equivalents of the English words, reconstructing the sentences, as he found one word after the other, until he had found out the sound, meaning, and radical of each character. Then he wrote them over and over, until he had acquired them thoroughly. This tedious way of learning the characters was continued until he arrived in Hong-Kong; but no one, unless acquainted with the Chinese language, can fully appreciate the tedium of acquiring its characters otherwise than by beginning with the radicals. I think he went over nearly the whole Gospel in this way before the end of the voyage, and then sat down to the study with a preparation and zest that few have brought to the task. It was a pleasant gratification to me to learn that the time spent on that small vocabulary had helped Mr. Burns in his

labours, for I remembered how helpless I felt on my voyage out fifteen years before, when I had no possible means of learning a single character, and reached the country quite ignorant of the people and their language.

"I went to Canton, and saw no more of Mr. Burns until he came to that city to live in 1850. Before that date I heard of his having been robbed of all his baggage while living on the mainland, opposite Hong-Kong, whither he had gone to see what could be done in effecting a settlement among the people. The thieves broke up his quarters, and while he was present helped themselves to clothes, books, and money as they pleased, leaving him just enough garments for protection, and means to get back to Hong-Kong. One fellow had his hone, and being puzzled to know its use, brought it to Mr. Burns to learn what it was fit for, and was patiently taught the mode of sharpening a razor or knife on it. These ruffians did not belong to the villagers, but the latter made no attempt to defend or protect the foreigner. But, no doubt, this beginning had its salutary effect upon them."

From another informant I am enabled to add one or two further touches to this characteristic and romantic incident. He had, it would appear, with some hesitation, and without any clear indication of the Master's will, proceeded westward beyond the range of his first labours, into a part of the country where the people were notoriously less accessible and friendly; and being afraid that he had run, without being sent, into the midst of unknown difficulties and dangers, he had lain long awake in anxious and pensive questioning. While still thus musing he became suddenly aware of the presence in the chamber of two muffled figures, who, approaching with stealthy steps and blackened faces to his bedside, stood over him with naked swords held to his breast. "Do no vio-

lence, my friends," he said calmly, "and you shall have all I have;" and then followed the characteristic scene described by Dr. Williams. When the landlord of the house came in next morning to condole with his guest on his loss, "Poor fellows!" said he, "let us pray for them." The robbers took with them literally all he had, save only the contents of a loose bag, which lay in a corner of the room, and which, seeming to contain nothing but useless papers, had fortunately been neglected by them. Beneath the papers, however, there were some shreds of under garment, of which the missionary contrived to make for himself an outlandish costume, in which he found his way back to the sea-coast, and thence to Hong-kong; waiting under cover in the boat until the return of a messenger supplied him with the means of appearing on shore in a more appropriate garb.

"At this time," continues Dr. Williams, "the controversy among Protestant missionaries, in respect to the best word for *God* and *god* in Chinese, was carried on very warmly, and our friend could not but enter earnestly into the discussion of so vital a question. He and I took opposite sides, and we had some discussions on the nature and value of the arguments used in support of each, especially on the plurality of the idea connected in the minds of the natives with the word *shin*, which to him was an insuperable reason for not using it for the true God. Mr. Burns had the true Scotch mind, and when he had made up his opinion, nothing had much power to move it. Views that to my mind had much weight to modify this idea of the plurality of the word *shin*, seemed to carry none to his; he had settled the matter in his mind, and the question need not therefore be revived for re-examination.

"Dr. P. Parker had religious services at his house every

Sabbath evening, and Mr. Burns often conducted them, preaching at times with great point and solemnity. The audience consisted mostly of the missionaries and their families; but if the one whose turn it was to hold the service, was unable from any reason to fill his place, Mr. Burns usually supplied the gap, for he had said that he never could conscientiously say *no* to any application to preach, as long as he was physically able. There was therefore great disparity in his public ministrations, and sometimes he repeated himself without perhaps knowing it; I don't think that he preached once in my hearing from notes, and as the week had been taken up with Chinese study and preaching, he, of course, could only make short preparation for these Sabbath evenings. Yet his intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures enabled him, if he was in good health, to illustrate and enforce the text and its instruction, so that every one could carry away a warning or an encouragement that would benefit him.

"After a while circumstances arose that rendered it desirable in his opinion to remove some of the meetings held at Dr. Parker's house, and Mr. Burns took a leading part in endeavouring—first, to prevent moving them at all, by obviating the causes which suggested it; and when this was found unattainable, by explaining the reasons which led to such a decision, in a letter he wrote upon the matter. The discussion continued for a week or two before the matter was settled, and during the days it went on I was struck with the manner in which feeling was restrained by a sense of duty in his mind. To most of the missionary circle, it seemed on some accounts best to content ourselves with an expression of opinion, and let that opinion gradually have its due weight in leading to a change in practice on the part of those we felt were fellow-Christians; but with Mr. Burns the witness must be borne at any rate, and the consequences be left with God.

"He was induced ere long, by the little success the work had at Canton, to go further north, and try to reach people who lived away from so much contact as the Cantonese had

with foreigners. He found the work more congenial at Amoy and Swatow, where, and in their vicinity, he spent many years, and did a great and lasting work in extending missionary labours among their rural populations, and founding Christian communities.

"In August, 1854, I arrived in Amoy soon after his co-labourer, Dr. James Young, was laid aside from his work by illness. As soon as Mr. Burns heard of a sudden access of the malady, he came in from the country, to start immediately for home with the invalid and his motherless children. He consulted with no one but his Master, and every one agreed that the decision was a proper one, much as all his associates regretted the cause and its effect—the illness of one, and the absence of the other from his interesting meetings in Pechuia. It no doubt saves much heart-rasping and mind-wearying thought, to be able, as he did, to decide at once, and act on a point, even if sometimes one acts unwisely. The next thing was to get a passage to Hong-Kong as soon as possible, in time for the outgoing P. and O. steamer. The only vessel available was the U.S.S. *Powhatan*, and the captain deemed it unadvisable to take the party as passengers. However Mr. Burns carried the day against the objections of the captain, whose ill-health was after all the principal ground for at first refusing the application. The skilful manner in which the domestic tie, of a darling daughter of the captain's in America, who was about the same age as Dr. Young's child, was brought up by our friend to induce him to carry the invalid to Hong-Kong, showed a good deal of insight into human nature.

"It was on the way to Hong-Kong that I learned all that I then knew of this first outpouring of the Holy Spirit [in China],[1] and heard from his lips how he had been led to go to

[1] "Dr. Williams," says the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, "has here fallen into a mistake (not remarkable, considering the long period that intervenes) as to the history of the Amoy work. For there were a very considerable number of converts at Amoy before the Pechuia awakening began; and the 'native agents' alluded to were some of

this place by much the same influences as Philip the evangelist was led to go towards Gaza. I had been in China in the mission work twenty-one years, and now the blessing had really descended in an unmistakable way; and I rejoiced with him at the native agency and thoroughness of the work, and how God had taken the weak things of the world to show the power of his grace. I felt more encouraged than at anything I had before heard in China; and the evidences of God's approbation of the mission work here, which this movement then showed, have ever since gladdened my heart, and strengthened my faith in its final triumph.

"After Mr. Burns' return to China, I saw nothing of him till he had reached Hong-Kong, after his liberation by Governor Yeh at Canton, in October, 1856, after they had brought him overland to that city from Chaon-chow-foo by way of Kiaying-chow, in the eastern end of the province. He there learned that some of the native Christians who had been with him at Swatow before his own arrest, were in prison, and he wished to get near to them so that he might do what he could for their welfare. There was no vessel going to Swatow except a small native junk, and we dissuaded Mr. Burns from embarking in such a rickety craft at so late a period of the year, even as a matter of time; for by a little delay he would no doubt find a safer vessel, which would land him there quicker. But nothing would move him. He had heard the voice of God, and felt no fears as to the result of the voyage. He left that night in her, reaching Swatow after nearly a month's tedious coasting, which however was, I suppose, no loss to him, for he preached to the crew, and suffered no derangement in his plans by the delay. This example of our friend, in regarding the people wherever he met them as his audience, is one that cannot be too strongly urged upon all heralds of

the fruits, even then already ripe, of that previous Amoy work. There seems also to be some confusion as to the 'influences' which led to visiting Pechuia: these were the invitations of persons who had heard the gospel at Amoy, and the advice of the native agents."

the gospel in heathen lands. Yet this feature of his mind had its effect in deterring those around him from giving him advice when he asked it, inasmuch as he followed his inward convictions sometimes when outward arguments tended the other way. In this instance, the time of the year, and the unsettled condition of the coast, would have weighed with most men to seek another mode of conveyance; but whether such a course as he took in such dilemmas—that of seeking a manifestation of some kind to know what the will of God is—would answer for all, or whether all are capable of hearing the inward voice, is a curious question. I have never known another person who had as little hesitation in following what he regarded as this inward monition and guidance. In this instance there was no long weighing of the reasons, nor much discussion upon their value; he had looked squarely at both sides, and his choice had no revision.

"After a lapse of six years, during which Mr. Burns had proved his devotion to the mission work in Fokien and Kiangsu by travelling and preaching, he and I arrived in Amoy the same day, he from Fuh-chow in April, 1862.

"Travel and exposure had made their marks on him, but he was still vigorous, and was projecting new trips in the surrounding country, then opening more than ever to the preaching of the gospel; and I was glad to hear how the work had progressed since the day he told me the story about Pechuia, eight years before, on board the *Powhatan*. I took a review of the twenty years which had elapsed since Dr. Abeel and Bishop Boone left Macao, in February, 1842, to begin a mission at Amoy, where the latter buried his admirable wife, and the former laboured on in faith and patience until others came to his help, and others to theirs, until we now see a Christian community preparing to take its place as an acknowledged fact in Chinese society. In laying the foundations of this blessed superstructure, few have done more to the glory of God than William Burns.

"The purpose for which he came to Peking in 1864, to

endeavour to obtain the same recognition of the civil rights of Protestants that the Roman Catholics had, was not attained in the manner he wished; but his mission was not fruitless. He made known the condition of the missions in Fokien province to the late Sir Frederick Bruce, and gave him a juster perception of the mode of carrying on missionary work than he had before, and the nature of the disabilities under which the converts then laboured. Sir Frederick declared that Mr. Burns was one of the most fascinating men in representing a case that he had ever met, and gave one a clear idea of whatever he undertook to describe.[1]

"The daily routine of the life he led in Peking for three years was very uniform. He dwelt by himself in one room, his own servant occupying the next, and almost every day visited one or other of the mission chapels connected with the four missions in the city. The version of the second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress* is likely to be the most permanent of his literary labours in the northern dialect; for his *Peep of Day* and the version of the Psalms in tetrameters[2] are less acceptable to native taste. He visited frequently at the houses of his friends, who were always cheered by his presence, and towards the last part of his stay he gave all his strength to preaching the gospel to such audiences as were gathered in the chapels."

In another letter, Dr. Williams adds:—"In Peking I saw more of him than previously, and enjoyed his visits at my house greatly; he was particularly interested in the progress, causes, and conduct of the slavery war in the United States, and kept up a minute acquaintance with its events, studying the geography of the seats of war, the character of the principal leaders and generals, and the

[1] See in regard to this whole subject, a valuable paper in Appendix (No. IV.), on the recent troubles in China, by the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, M.A.

[2] *Scottice*, long measure.

changes of public sentiment as the war developed more and more the detestable nature of the bondage of the slave."

To another valued friend and true yoke-fellow in the work of Christ, the Rev. Joseph Edkins, M.A., of the London Missionary Society, I am indebted for the following graphic and touching memorials, which will form a fitting sequel to Dr. Williams' narrative, and give to us a still more distinct idea of the nature of his work, and of his manner of life, during those quiet and comparatively uneventful years—the land of Beulah of a life which had had in full measure its Hills of Difficulty, its combats with Apollyon, and its solemn witnessings in Vanity Fair, as well as blessed glimpses of the Celestial City from the heights of the Delectable Hills:—

"The Rev. W. C. Burns came to Peking in 1863, and at once opened to Sir Frederick Bruce the matter to attempt the settlement of which he had come. He went to stay with Rev. W. H. Collins (C.M.S.), who met him as he entered the city gate, and at once claimed him as a guest. It was not his object, however, to live with any of the mission families. He wished a house for himself. A small house with a little self-contained court was rented for him at 2*s.* 6*d.* a month. Here he lived for four years. This house had a south exposure. On the west was Mr. Burns' room, with its two chairs, table, and khang. This last, used through all the north of China, is a brick structure at one end of the room, permeated by a winding flue, and when required can be heated from the front through an opening partly in the floor, and partly in the brick khang. On the east side was the servant's room, used also as kitchen. One servant was sufficient to buy, to cook, and to keep the house. When the servant went out, Mr.

Burns stayed at home. This simplicity of living was happiness to our lost friend. He enjoyed quietness, and the luxury of having few things to take care of. He delighted to live on little, that he might have more to give to the cause of God. He was a generous friend to the poor, to hospitals, to various mission schemes.

"In the summer, according to Peking custom, he had an awning of reed-mats extended over his court. This, in north China, greatly helps the people to pass the summer in comfort. In the evening the mats of the awning are drawn open sufficiently to admit the night air. We have a hot short summer, at an average of 90°, as we have a cold winter averaging 15°, when the ice never thaws till the opening of spring, but remains a foot thick through the season. Our friend had a small clay-stove lit for the season. Here he sat summer and winter with his teacher, engaged for a good part of each year in hymn-making and translation.

"His first work in Peking was a volume of hymns, about fifty in number. These were chiefly translations from home hymns, or hymns used in the south of China rehabilitated in the mandarin dialect. They have been extensively used since, and will continue to be so. He usually adopted, in addition to the seven-foot measure, which is the commonest Chinese metre, the various measures in which English hymns are composed. He still speaks to us in our assemblies, and is the mouthpiece of our praise by these compositions, which gave him much agreeable occupation.

"When he had printed this collection, he undertook a translation of the *Peep of Day* in fifty chapters. It treats of man, the creation and the fall, in nine chapters. The history of Jesus follows, and occupies the whole work to the forty-sixth chapter. It concludes with four chapters on pentecost, the deliverance of Peter from prison, the apocalypse of John, and the last judgment. This excellent little work has been widely circulated, and is found to form a very suitable introduction to the gospel history. Mr. Burns omitted some portions of

the original, and substituted new narratives as appeared to him appropriate. At the end of each chapter there is a short Chinese poem, giving the cream of the preceding narrative in rhyme, and in a manner to which the natives of China are very much accustomed in their light literature. This work is in the Peking dialect.

"The *Pilgrim's Progress* was his next work. Formerly at Amoy he had translated this book in a simple style. He now resolved to render it again into Chinese, adopting the dialect of Peking. The first and second parts are complete in two thick volumes. Some of the copies are illustrated with woodcuts. Some additions are found to the text in the second part, where an attempt has been made to increase the usefulness of the work to native women by showing the principles that should rule in Christian marriage.

"Immediately after the completion of this work, he commenced a translation of the Psalms from the Hebrew. It was published in the spring of 1867, a year before his death. It is composed in four-word sentences throughout so as to assume a regular appearance of symmetry; but this advantage has been gained at the expense of smoothness. To each psalm there is an introduction stating the argument. There are also many text-references to the New Testament and other parts of Scripture. These additions add much to the value of the book.

"While engaged constantly in these literary enterprises, Mr. Burns never intermitted preaching when not physically incapacitated for it. He preached much at the chapel of the London Mission hospital, within two or three minutes' walk of his residence. His assistance here was annually recognized by Dr. Dudgeon in the printed report. He preached also very frequently at a chapel of Dr. Martin's outside of the east gate, and at another more than a mile north of the London Mission hospital, belonging to the American Board. He also officiated occasionally at Mr. Collins' chapel, belonging to the Church Missionary Society, on the west side of the city. His

services at all these places were very acceptable, and given with the greatest good-will and the most catholic spirit: he thus aimed at the glory of Christ independently of his particular denomination, and was in this respect an example worthy of imitation, for the maintenance of sectarian distinctions in China may be regarded as almost unnecessary. The truth that we are all one in Christ Jesus may well unite missionaries of different communions in heart and practice. Whenever the Church of Christ in China becomes strong enough to be separated from the British and American missionary organizations, it will be advisable for them to unite in one church system of their own, framed in a manner consonant with Scripture; but adapted for China, and not modelled after any of the existing sects of Western Christendom. With this theory Mr. Burns' *practice* well agreed. He was at home with all Protestant Christians, and was greatly loved by all his brethren. His manly character, his sober views, his practical good sense, his kindly sociality, his mental strength, his moral decision, and his consistent and unaffected piety made him a friend greatly valued by us all. We enjoyed his coming to sit in the evenings, to share with us in his simple abstemious way at the social meal, to unite with us in family worship, or to join in the exercises of the week-evening prayer-meeting. He frequently preached in English at the Sunday evening service, held for the benefit of the mission families, and was always welcomed as one whose sermons were invariably characterized by solidity and faithfulness. He impressed his auditors with the fact, that he was a man of power and devotedness, a man whose atmosphere was prayer, and whose daily food was Scripture.

"With his large-hearted kindness, and great willingness to do evangelistic work whenever and wherever there was an opening, he went no fewer than four times on journeys connected with the country work of the London Mission at Peking. The first occasion was to Shen-cheu, a city south-south-west of Peking, and distant 170 miles. He went in

response to an invitation from the people, who wished a preacher to come and tell them the gospel. He stayed there about three weeks, and when he left thought that at least two of the natives were suitable for baptism. The Bible distributor who was with him thought there were four. Mr. Burns was very cautious in giving an opinion with regard to the fitness of applicants for baptism. His habit was to be stern in requiring decided sacrifices on the part of the inquirer, such as should constitute indubitable proof of his sincerity. It was perhaps this feeling which prevented his ever baptizing converts. He left that for other missionaries to do, claiming on all occasions, as an evangelist and not a pastor, the privilege of exemption from responsibility.

"Another town he visited was Tsai-yü; here he stayed a month on two occasions. The seeds of the gospel were, at this town, sown by him in some honest hearts, and grew to maturity after a long period. At that time the London Mission had a chapel there, with a lodging room annexed suitable for a missionary. Here he lived and daily preached the Word of Life. On one occasion a Russian physician went down to heal the sick, and on this occasion notice was sent previously, and placards were posted. Not very many patients appeared, and the kind Russian doctor returned after a few days. While he was there Mr. Burns preached, and acceded to the request made to him to have his portrait taken. This, it is believed, was the only time in his life that he consented to be photographed. It was a few days after his return to Peking that the likeness was taken by Dr. Pogogeff. It was for his mother's sake. Had he not known that she would be especially gratified by a portrait of him, he would probably have never consented to have it done, dreading the least appearance of vanity or self-idolatry. The publication of a woodcut from this picture in *Sunday at Home*, has made him widely known in his Chinese costume with shaved head and queue. He adopted this mode of dress about thirteen years (or fourteen) before his death, when at Shanghae, on a

journey with Rev. J. H. Taylor, now of Yang-chow. He never urged other missionaries to adopt the Chinese dress, and but few followed his example. As a rule every man looks best in his own national dress. It became Mr. Burns, especially in his later life (when his hair grew nearly white), as well as most persons, although the deep-set eyes and prominent nose of the European physiognomy prevented him entirely from ever being taken for a Chinese. But he retained the costume, not because he felt it to be a duty to conform to the manner of the country, but from the inconvenience attendant in going back to the European mode.

"On another occasion Mr. Burns went with a catechist and hospital dispenser to Pan-pi-tien, near the imperial western cemetery. He was there located in a temple at the invitation of the priest, who had made an offer of the property to the London Mission to found a hospital. Mr. Burns, having some knowledge of law, always took an interest in legal questions, and worked laboriously to arrive at a safe conclusion in all such matters. Many sick were healed, and to many the gospel was preached during this visit, but the temple was found not to be the priest's to give, and soon after Mr. Burns' return the negotiation was terminated abruptly, by the removal of the priest to another temple.

"Mr. Burns held very distinct and decided views on the most appropriate word in the Chinese language for God in the Christian sense. Without saying categorically that the Shang-ti of the Chinese classics is the 'true God,' he held that this term is the most appropriate to be used, on account of its being the most correct, distinct, noble, and unmistakeable word to be found. When in Peking an attempt was initiated to unite all Protestant Christians in China in the use of one term, and that the Roman Catholic term, Tien-chu, Lord of heaven, he withheld his consent, and was at the time the only Protestant missionary in Peking who did so. Thus for the whole of his long missionary course, of more than twenty years, he adhered steadily to the use of the term

which has been adopted by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and is most extensively used in the Protestant missions.

"The change proposed extended only to the use of the Roman Catholic term in a single version, namely, that in the colloquial mandarin dialect, but it met with little favour in the southern stations, and is now supported by very few.

"Strongly as he felt in regard to the use of the proper terms to be employed for God and for the Holy Spirit, he would, when preaching in the chapels of those missionaries whose views differed from his own, modify his phraseology so as to suit his peculiar position at the time. His broad and manifest charity, won to him all his brethren."

In the autumn of 1867, he left Peking, urged forward as usual by the necessity that he ever felt laid upon him, of withdrawing from a field which was comparatively well occupied and cared for, and proceeding to others more neglected. His life at Peking had been peculiarly pleasant to him, and his friends and his work congenial; but he was all the more prepared to hear the voice that summoned him to a sterner and more self-denying service elsewhere. For the following account of the circumstances of his departure, and of his journey to Nieuchwang, I am again indebted to Mr. Edkins' graphic pen:—

"Wang-hwan who was baptized by me in Peking four years ago, is a native of a village about thirty miles from Peking, and six miles from Tsai-yü, where at that time the London Mission had a chapel. He heard Mr. Burns occasionally at Tsai-yü, and was afterwards brought to decision for the gospel in connection with the work of one of our catechists, for a time in charge at the chapel at Tsai-yü,

and who is now dead. Wang-hwan became a changed man, and after his baptism in the hospital chapel, Peking, appeared to his neighbours a very different person from what he once was. They saw in him a man peaceable and well-behaved, whereas he had once been the opposite.

"Mr. Burns took him with him after much consideration, and was influenced more by satisfactory evidence of deep interest in religion and a love for prayer, than by any ability that he showed. He had had the education of a small country farmer, that is three or four years' schooling, just enough to enable him to transact ordinary business. Since that time he has improved himself. When Mr. Burns left Peking for Tientsin, in the autumn of 1867, it was still an open question whether he would go to Nieu-chwang or to Shantung. I had been laying before him a request from Shantung from several persons for a preacher. If he had gone there he would have passed through the villages where the Methodist New Connexion Mission and our own are situated, and his experience in manifestations of the spiritual life both in Christian countries and in China would have rendered his testimony to the character of these Christians one of great value.

"But his sense of duty and his knowledge of the need of a missionary at Nieu-chwang, led him there in preference. The captain of the native junk in which he went would take no money from him for the passage. This was on account of his character, and that of the catechist. Going not for trade but to do good, it appeared to this heathen sailor unreasonable to accept payment of passage money. Arrived at Nieu-chwang they began to seek a house, and found one at last in the outskirts. Here they became domiciled, and public and private services were daily held. Many persons attended, and the hearts of our departed brother and of the catechist were cheered.

"On Sundays Mr. Burns performed worship in English at the consulate as long as his health allowed."

Of the general course of his life and labours during the few remaining days of his earthly ministry, the following brief recollections of the mate of a trading vessel which happened at that time to touch at the port of Nieu-chwang, afford an interesting and life-like glimpse:—

"In October, 1867," says this Christian seaman, in a communication printed in the *Sunday at Home*, "I left Che-foo, in the barque *Lady Alice*, for Nieu-chwang, where we arrived about the 6th. I had learned from the missionaries at Che-foo that a missionary of the name of Burns was at Nieu-chwang. The first Lord's-day after arrival our captain and second mate went on shore to the British consul's office. This was the only place for worship at Nieu-chwang, except the meeting on board our vessel. It being the second mate's turn on shore, I told him if the minister was dressed like a Chinaman, to introduce himself to him, and deliver a message for me. On his return at dinner-time I was much cheered and delighted to hear that it was Mr. Burns that held the service, and that the service was no formal ceremony, nor with enticing words of man's wisdom, but very earnest and very faithful, warning them to attend to the salvation of their souls, and commending godliness as profitable in all things. After the service my friend carried out my wishes, and met a hearty welcome from Mr. Burns, who was himself cheered at hearing there were some belonging to our ship professing to be the ransomed of the Lord, and trying in some feeble way to acknowledge him and commend him to others.

"He sent me an invitation to come and see him on a certain day of the week, I forget now which day. His Chinese servant was to meet me on my landing, and conduct me to him. I landed at the appointed time, and was conducted accordingly to the missionary I had never seen. I shall not soon forget it, for we seemed to meet as friends that had been acquainted for a long time. I felt perfectly at

home with him. Mr. Burns walked up and down the yard of his house arm-in-arm with me, and talked to me as a friend, brother, or father, in the most kind and familiar manner. As iron sharpeneth iron, so did the countenance of a man his friend that day.

"He told about how the Lord had guided him to that place (Nieu-chwang). He had many friends, he said, where he had been staying for four years before, and was very comfortable; but he wanted to come to Nieu-chwang because there was no one labouring there. He said we must not study comfort: they that go to the front of the battle get the blessing; the skulkers get no blessing. I have often thought of that since, for indeed it was a word in season to me at the time. He told me how he arrived there in a junk, or native vessel, and how kind they were to him, and how he had been guided to the house he was then living in. He spoke as seeing the dealing of God in his providence in all his ways. . . .

"It was a very happy time, I think, to both—a time of refreshing. I did not stay late, as I had some mile and a half to walk. The Chinaman again conducted me back. We started with the understanding that Mr. Burns was to visit our ship, I think the next evening; so when I got on board I obtained permission from the captain for us to hold a meeting in the cabin. I hoisted my Bethel flag in the afternoon, and when our friend came on board we told him we had the royal standard flying, 'for I suppose you belong to the royal family.' He took tea with me and the second mate (the captain was on shore), and in the evening, when all the crew were with us, he gave an address about the Saviour and the woman of Samaria. There was one illustration I remember which shows his homely and forcible way of putting things. He compared the woman of Samaria to a fish with the hook in its mouth, twisting about, trying to get loose; but the more it tried to clear itself the firmer hold the hook got of it. The whole of the address was very interesting and very earnest, and was well received.

"After he had done, he requested one of us to engage in prayer. Our cook, a black man, by the name of Cæsar, offered a very earnest prayer. It was, indeed, pleasant, in this dry and barren land, thus, for a short time, to dwell together in unity. After our meeting was ended not one offered to move; and our dear friend, sitting at the head of the table, told us about his travels in China, and of his being taken prisoner with two Chinese converts, and sent through the country, with many other things which are probably well known. Thus our time soon flew away, till the parting had to take place. Our cook had a set of Wesleyan hymn-books, which we used for worship. He sent Mr. Burns one, with which he was very pleased, and talked of translating it into the Chinese language. This was one of the happiest evenings of our voyage. . . . He spoke to me very affectionately about his mother, and most of his affairs. When the time drew near for us to part he handed me the Bible and bade me read something. I read the 103d Psalm, and could not help (nor need I try to) giving vent to my feelings while reading it, there seemed such a blessing flowing from it. It was like the river whose streams make glad the city of God. I think we could set to our seal that the word of God is true. After we had prayed, Mr. Burns said, 'The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him;' and we both joined in saying, 'to all that call upon him in truth.' . . .

"When parting I spoke to him of his kindness, and the great honour I had received from him, when he put his arms around me, and said, 'Don't mention it, don't mention it! Our meeting is providential.' Thus we parted. The Chinaman again conducted me back in the beautiful still moonlight. I cannot attempt to describe the sweet and blessed meditation I had while returning to my ship. I have thus simply spoken of my meeting, intercourse, and parting with a blessed man of God, the remembrance of which is still dear and sweet to me. I have good reasons to look back to this time, and praise that God who has been so merciful to me in all

my wanderings. Mr. Burns was a saving shield to me in God's providence at that place, and as an angel of the Lord.

'Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love.'

'By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another; and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him that is begotten of him.' Mr. Burns was an Israelite indeed. . . .

"He then seemed," wrote Cæsar the black cook in a post-script to the above, "to me to have been well advanced in years. Nevertheless he moved about and spoke the Word of Life as brisk as can be expected from a man of thirty years of age. He said we all wanted stirring up; and so he did stir us up on board of the ship, for he made a lasting impression on my mind. He spoke freely and boldly about the changes pertaining to that world which is to come. He put me in mind of one who had already gone through his refining process. He appeared then to be ripe for glory, if we may use the term, and I feel sure that he is 'gone home' to the city of the living God, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, who was waiting, no doubt, to welcome his ransomed and faithful one. He gave me the *Pilgrim's Progress* that he translated while he was out there, from English into the Chinese language. His last words to me were, 'Pray for me.' He also wrote the words down on the book he gave me, so that I should not forget. Last night, unknowingly,[1] I prayed for him for the last time. So now my prayers cease from last night, and turn to praise; and I shall expect to meet him face to face."

On the 21st November, he wrote the following lines, breathing his usual cheerful and happy spirit, to his valued colleague, Mr. Douglas, one of the last letters of any length he ever wrote on earth:—

[1] Not knowing of his death.

"*Nieu-chwang, November 21st*, 1867.—DEAR MR. DOUGLAS,—Your letter of August 31st reached me this P.M. per steamer *Manchu*, and as she is the last vessel for this season, I hasten to send a few lines by her to Shanghae. Many thanks for the life-like photograph of yourself which you have sent me. You are more like the man that you were intended to be *with* than *without* the 'beard.' May it please God in his mercy long to preserve you in the health and vigour which you seemed to have enjoyed when the likeness was taken, and may your soul 'prosper and be in health,' even as the body 'prospers!' For the last five months, I have allowed my 'beard' also to grow on the lower part of the face. This both saves a great deal of time and trouble, and, in this cold latitude, the hair is a protection to the throat. I fear I cannot write home pressing the claims of Singapore on our mission, when their energies are likely to be fully tasked in maintaining and extending the missions at *Amoy*, *Swatow*, and on *Formosa*. It seems to me that no place more suitable (or perhaps so suitable) could be recommended to the Irish Presbyterians than *Nieu-chwang*, and Manchuria beyond, a vast, open, and unoccupied field, with a fine climate, and a population comparatively well off in a worldly point of view. In writing home, I have already made this suggestion, and I hope that on consideration you will see your way to second my proposal. If the Irish were here, would this not be a fine place to come to from the south for a change of air? and you yourself, when needing such a change, would enjoy the opportunity of using and increasing your Mandarin. Mr. Cowie, too, would be only sent back to his *Che-foo* dialect, a great part of the people in this town being from that quarter. You can have no idea of the extent of the trade that is carried on here in grain and oil, as well as bean-cake, furs, &c. &c. I shall only mention what was told me by a gentleman connected with the imperial customs, viz.: that two years ago it was estimated that during one winter 80,000 carts came to this place from the interior laden with grain and oil. It is

common for from 500 to 1000 to come in on a single day during the winter months; and throughout all the region which furnishes this supply, including the provinces of the *Amour* and *Kirin*, as well as the province of *Kwan-tung*, pure Mandarin is universally spoken. Mr. Meadows is now absent on a three months' journey to the north and east, passing through the centre of these three provinces. Romish priests are found here and there, but the only representative of the Protestant churches is my solitary self! I lately heard from Mr. Grant, and also from *Si-boo*. Mr. G. has now removed to Singapore from Penang, and so Singapore is not so destitute as it used to be. Mr. G. is married too, to a lady who lately came out, as perhaps you may have heard. As to the repairs at Pechuia, I shall be glad that you put me down, say, for the sum of £20 sterling, but it will be the end of February before I can furnish you with an order on our treasurer for that amount, my accounts for the year being already made up. I am rejoiced to hear that while man is repairing the chapel, God himself is again graciously putting forth his hand to repair the spiritual walls of that little church. May backsliders return to their first love, as well as additions be made to the church of 'such as shall be saved!' Who was that young man—an assistant of Dr. Maxwell's—who was lost in the Formosa Channel? Not, I hope, the young man from *Chióh-bey*, who was afterwards chapel-keeper at Sin-koeya? I must now conclude, as it is getting late. Pray for us, and commend us to the prayers of the churches. I should have mentioned that Mr. Williamson of Che-foo, who was lately here, left a native assistant to sell books here during the winter. He and the man who came with me from Peking occupy themselves in this work in the principal street, preaching at the same time to the people. I join them generally during a part of the time, and the opportunity is a valuable one, especially as our house is too retired for collecting passers-by. A separate house we thought we had got for preaching was at last held back, and is now an opium-smok-

ing den! Christian love to all the brethren. Yours affectionately,—WM. C. BURNS."

The following letter, which came to me altogether unsought, just as I was approaching this part of my task, will tell almost all that now remains to be said, and in terms than which the fondest affection could have desired nothing more loving or tender:—

"*Nieu-chwang, 6th July*, 1869.—MY DEAR SIR,—When in conversation with an intimate friend of your late brother the Rev. Wm. C. Burns, I related the particulars of my last interview with him, which occurred a few days before his death; and as far as I know, the last hour when he was in full possession of his faculties. I was then informed that you were gradually collecting material for a book which should illustrate his missionary labours in China, and was pressed to repeat to you what I knew of his closing life. This is difficult to do in a letter; it is difficult to express in writing what I might so easily relate to you by word of mouth, without entering rather at length into his previous life, *i.e.* at this port. As you are aware, it was in August, 1867, that he arrived at Nieu-chwang; for the purpose, as he then said, of seeing what could be done toward establishing a mission in the province of Manchuria. He was accompanied by a native Christian of Peking to assist him in his labours. With them they brought only their personal clothing, and Bibles and books for distribution. I had never seen your brother before; but at my first interview was impressed with the earnest simplicity of his manner, and the cheerfulness which I afterwards noticed he at all times carried with him. A few days after this I went to visit him in the native town at a small inn where he was then staying. I found him lying down in a very small apartment, which was destitute of every comfort. He was ill, but arose to meet me. He would allow no expressions of pity for the want of these

comforts, and soon made me forget them in listening to the history of his labours at Peking, while making translations of various works. I was from that moment very fully impressed with the genuineness of the love which had actuated his motives in devoting his life to the work of a missionary. A little later on he had found a house wherein to begin his labours. His days were spent in preaching to the inhabitants in the streets, distributing and selling books. Sundays, he preached to the foreigners in the foreign settlement in the forenoon; and in the afternoon to the natives at his house, which for all intents and purposes was recognized as the Christian chapel. It was delightful to see how faithfully he performed his duties,—how on every Sabbath morning he appeared in our settlement punctual to the hour, having to come nearly two miles through the heat, and through the cold, and often to encounter the bad roads of the country. By his kindly manner, his spotless reputation, his Christian earnestness, he drew a goodly number to listen to him. As he talked on, his face became all alive with the deep faith he had in the truths he endeavoured to communicate; and his face often and often became radiant with a light, revealing the love which warmed him into eloquence. He seemed to possess a zeal which might have belonged to the earlier days, when apostles went forth so fearless and with so much love. One could not but observe this peculiar power which he possessed. For a moment he would speak with great force, and then change to tones of gentleness which were as impressive as they were childlike in their utterance. All this and far more you must know. Observing these characteristics, led me to have confidence in the impressions he was likely to give to the natives. Even in the short time he spent among them here, a few learned to inquire into the Christian doctrines.

"Early in January he was taken ill with a cold which brought on fever, from which he never recovered. For weeks and months he lingered in helpless weakness. I went to see

him often. One day he said, 'I have been thinking that perhaps this is to be my last illness.' From that time he frequently told me of his hopes and his fears. As he lay upon his bed, he thought out his plans for the future, and his sole desire to live seemed to be that he might labour to carry them out for the good of those he had come among. For a long time he would insist upon his assistant preaching in the next room, that he might listen. And nearly up to the time of his death, he would have him and his servant—who by-the-by was becoming a Christian through his teaching—conduct the morning and evening prayers by his bedside. When he spoke of life, he said what he himself would do. When he spoke of death, he prayed that others might be found to continue the work he had begun. When talking of either he was equally resigned—always cheerful, always happy. If he had fears at all, they must have appertained more to the things of this world than to the other. And in preparing for this, he was preparing for the other. You know how he arranged for the support of his native assistant after his death, and until such a time as a foreigner should arrive. I will not therefore repeat.

"And now I come to speak of the last hours. One evening about six o'clock, I went to see him. I found him suffering from hard and difficult breathing, and I felt that death was near. So I sat by him and talked of the hour which was coming—of the life which was beyond. In reply to my inquiry whether there was anything I could do for him after he was gone, he said, 'No, I have arranged everything; all I have to ask is that you will keep your promise in regard to my wishes for this mission.' I began to repeat to him familiar passages from the Scriptures, in which he joined as often as his strength would allow; he would listen until I came to the lines which he loved the most, when he would say them aloud, his voice though very low, yet singularly deep. When I began the psalm, 'The Lord is my Shepherd,' a beautiful smile broke over his countenance and he pressed

my hand more firmly; and his voice assumed, with all its weakness, something of the old depth as we came to the words, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil.' When with much fervour he had repeated the Lord's Prayer, we sat in silence. He assured me he was very happy. And thus he died, as it were, among the people with whom he had cast his lot; indeed we might almost say among the very scenes with which he had identified his life. One who could have watched his declining days when he naturally, more or less, gave expression to his views, would have marked with interest the contrast between the mind and thoughts so trained to higher themes, and the heart so contented with lowly things. The little room in which he died had but few comforts, certainly no luxuries. The form on which he slept, a table, two chairs, two book-cases, and an open-grate, foreign stove made up the furniture. The light came into the room through a large paper window. But I shall long remember the solemn hour which I have endeavoured to describe to you. The assistant sat at his feet weeping, now and then raising his eyes upward in silent prayer, and the servant on one side watching with tenderness his wants. And these two simple-minded natives, judging from their life and sayings since, must have profited by his last injunctions. And so after the years of toil he passed away into the other world. 'God,' he said, 'will carry on the good work.' 'Ah! no, I have no fears for that.'

"It was a rare privilege to have known your brother. His firmness of purpose was remarkable; his Christian faith supporting to himself, as well as encouraging to others; his gentleness most touching; his happiness genuine. And to me these incidents which I have related contain more than I am able to express."

One or two further touches from like loving hands will complete the picture of this calm and radiant sun-setting. The following reminiscences of his humble native assistant,

Wang-hwang, have been kindly furnished to me by Mr. Edkins, who took them down from his own lips:—

"While he was here," says Mr. Edkins, in continuation of the notes already quoted, "I questioned him about Mr. Burns' last words of testimony to the gospel, in the service of which he lived and died. What he said is here appended. 'It was the 28th day of the 7th (Chinese) month when we arrived, and we were five days waiting at Takoo (the port at the mouth of the Tien-tsin river). While there we went daily from our boat to preach in the streets. When we went on board the junk, the captain declined to attend our services; but on the third day he and the two cooks joined us. When Mr. Burns offered him passage-money, the captain said, 'I know you are not going to seek gain, for in that case you would certainly travel by steamer, or by a foreign sailing vessel.' He belongs to a fishing village called Tien-kia-tsui, a few miles north of Takoo on the coast.

"'We went on well till the 16th day of the 12th month. On this day Mr. Burns was taken ill, and lay for ninety-four days, when his spirit fled. He had felt pleasure in preaching that day. Many foreigners were present, which rejoiced him. When he came back from the English service, and saw sixty or seventy Chinese pressing in to hear, he said, 'I will preach to them.' He preached for two hours. After this he felt no appetite, took no food, and lay down weary. About eleven o'clock P.M. he waked shaking with cold. For twenty days after this he did not leave the house. When prayer time came, he said, 'Come to my bedside, I will still preach to you.' So the little band of inquirers gathered with Wang-hwan round the sick missionary, for whom it was appointed that he should soon go home.

"'When his illness became severe, he made me promise that I would stay at Nieu-chwang. When we left Peking he was afraid, he told me, lest he should take the wrong man, a man different in mind and aim to himself. I said I would cer-

tainly stay at Nieu-chwang and carry out his injunctions. 'But,' he said, 'you have no strength or learning, and you must therefore be the more careful to be right, and to do what is right, so as to secure favour from God and approval from man. You must pray much for aid.'

"'One time when his sickness was severe he lay as if asleep, when in a moment I heard him talking. I asked him what he was saying. He replied, 'Ah! did you hear? I was saying over the 121st Psalm. I was speaking with God, not with you.'

"'Another time he laughed. I asked him why? He said, 'God was speaking with me, and this made my heart glad.'

"'Two days later, he said to me, 'God tells me to go. I have some things to say to you. As to my burial, I wish to have no new clothes bought, but to be buried in these.' (Referring to his Chinese clothing. The custom of the country is to buy a new suit, and lay the deceased in his coffin with complete dress as if living. It is quite a common thing to draw on the new clothing some hours before the death takes place.) He further said, 'Do not let the funeral be on Sunday. At the burial read 1 Cor. 15th chapter. Pray with the inquirers. Tell them to be sure to come and see me again in the place to which I am going. Do not weep after my death. Do not pray for me, but pray for the living. Diligently pray, and God will certainly send you a missionary.'

"'At another time, when he was a little better, a letter came from his mother. It said, 'Do not think of me, but of your work.' He told me what his mother said, and her words rejoiced him greatly. He added, 'She says I am a knife that must be worn out by cutting, not by rusting.' He wished it might be so. He also said, 'I am one of four brothers' (or 'I have four brothers'), 'one of them I would wish to exhort, but I shall not now have the opportunity. I hope others may do so.'

"'He urged me to believe as he did, pray as he did, read

diligently as he did, and use my mind as he did, 'and,' said he, 'God will help you to preach.'

"'If you are reproached, bear it patiently. To be patient is to glorify God. I was not sorry when in the south the time of suffering came, nor should you be. Think of what some missionaries have had to suffer, and such things should rather be rejoiced in as proof of God's care.

"'You can be my substitute when the new missionaries come. I cannot be here to receive them. You can do so, and must act for me. You must have the same heart as I have.

"'I felt in Peking that my work there was done. It was a trial to leave friends. Yet for the gospel I could not but go. We shall meet again in heaven; and think of the knife. You must be one of God's knives.

"'If there are inquirers, you must be careful to lead them in the right path, remembering that you are yourself not very strong nor learned. Take care to be diligent. Be indulgent to inquirers, exhort them much, and be very mindful of the example you set them, lest you should dishonour your Saviour, and cause sorrow to your pastor and friends. Always think of this.

"'I am very happy. I do not fear death. After death there is unspeakable happiness to be hoped for. Do not think I am sad at the thought of dying. I am not at all so. God's promises are true, and I fear not. My work has been little, but I have not knowingly disobeyed God's commands.'

"'The inquirers, five or six in number, went in to see him. He said, 'You see in me proof that the Christian doctrine is true. I am well supported now, and this strength which is given me, not to shrink at the approach of death, you can take as proof that what I believe is true; my illness, my decaying body, are also a testimony to the truth of the Bible. When I am gone you will have no missionary here. You must therefore pray much and think and read much that you may understand well. I have left friends and home to come here for the sake of this gospel that now supports me. I rely

on God now. Listen you to him, and let us resolve all to meet in heaven. Hope for this. Live for this.'"

It was in the midst of this "time of languishing," and when the shadows of the great night began visibly to close around him, that he wrote in his own hand, still clear and strong as of old, the following touching lines to his mother—embodying his last solemn testimony in behalf of Christ, and of that great cause to which he had devoted his life:—

"TO MY MOTHER.

"At the end of last year I got a severe chill which has not yet left the system, producing chilliness and fever every night, and for the last two nights this has been followed by perspiration, which rapidly diminishes the strength. Unless it should please God to rebuke the disease, it is evident what the end must soon be, and I write these lines beforehand to say that I am happy, and ready through the abounding grace of God either to live or to die. May the God of all consolation comfort you when the tidings of my decease shall reach you, and through the redeeming blood of JESUS may we meet with joy before the throne above!—WM. C. BURNS.

"*Nieu-chwang, Jan. 15th*, 1868.

"P.S.—Dr. Watson is very kind, and does everything in his power for my recovery."

To this is attached on a small fragment of Chinese paper, also in his own hand—a list of the texts on which he had

preached at Nieu-chwang, from a tender feeling obviously that she to whom he wrote would like to see it. Perhaps there are other eyes that may linger over the lines with mournful interest. It will be observed that the first two Sabbaths are blank, in consequence of the suffering and enfeebled state in which he arrived from Peking.

"TEXTS PREACHED ON AT NIEU-CHWANG.

Sept. 1st,	...	...	No meeting
Sept. 8th,	...	...	No meeting.
Sept. 15th,	...	...	John iii. 16.
Sept. 22d,	...	...	John xv. 14.
Sept. 29th,	...	...	Gal. v. 16.
Oct. 6th,	...	...	Mat. v. 3–12.
Oct. 13th,	...	...	John vi. 27.
Oct. 20th,	...	...	Luke xviii. 1–14.
Oct. 27th,	...	...	Luke xix. 1–10.
Nov. 3d, Mr Williamson,			John iv. 14.
Nov. 10th,	...	...	Mat. xxv. 1–13.
Nov. 17th,	...	...	John i. 29.
Nov. 24th,	...	...	Isaiah lv. 6, 7.
Dec. 1st,	...	...	Luke xv. (a good day).
Dec. 8th,	...	...	Luke xviii. 18–23.
Dec. 15th,	...	...	James iv. 7, 8.
Dec. 22d,	...	...	Rom. iii. 20–22.
Dec. 29th,	...	...	Rev. xx. 11–15."

Thus his last public testimony was to the same great truth of which he had witnessed so powerfully on the streets of Newcastle twenty-seven years before,[1] and the overwhelming conviction of which had so often imparted

[1] See p. 227.

an almost preternatural terribleness and grandeur to his words.

The tide of life now gently ebbed away. He spoke little even on those subjects that were dearest to him, lying for long days and nights in silence that was broken only by the soft footsteps of his Chinese assistant, and by the voices of the worshippers from time to time in the neighbouring room, in which it was his delight to know that his loved work was still carried on. His peace was calm and deep, but undemonstrative—like that of the river which speaks only by its silence and by the soft whispering of the reeds and lapping of the waters on its banks. "He did not speak much," wrote the Rev. A. Williamson, "on religious subjects either to Chinese or foreigners; and when he did, the burden of his remarks was that he was prepared to die or to live as the Lord might determine." "About a month after the commencement of his illness," says another friend who often visited him at this time, "he began to apprehend its fatal issue, but said he was quite prepared. After six weeks or so, his fresh looks began to leave him. The brightness of his eye faded, and gradually he became like an old decaying man." Yet now and then the old fire would for a moment awake, and impart an expiring energy alike to his voice and his frame. "Finding a decided change for the worse, and great distress in breathing, the gentleman just referred to repeated several portions of Scripture, among others Psalm xxiii. Hesitating at the words, 'Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,' Mr. Burns took it up, and in a deep strong voice

continued and finished the psalm. He also greatly relished John xiv., 'Let not your heart be troubled,' and on closing the exercise with the Lord's Prayer Mr. Burns suddenly became emphatic, and repeated the latter portion and doxology, 'FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY,' with extraordinary power and decision. This was the last time he manifested any power of mind. Afterwards he only evinced recognition, and at last hardly spoke or even opened his eyes. Thus he passed away."

This is the last glimpse we have of him ere he passes out of sight. On the afternoon of the day on which he died, the kind doctor who had so tenderly watched over him throughout, hearing that he was worse, hastened, in company with the consular assistant, to his bedside, but just too late to see him die, though the heart and pulse were still beating when they arrived.

He was buried in the foreign graveyard, according to the simple rites of the Presbyterian Church, Dr. Watson, according to his own express desire, reading those grand words in 1 Cor. xv. 42–57: "So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first, which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of

the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound;) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It was a dreary and desolate place, and the river was fast washing it away, but Dr. Watson informs me in his last letter that the precious dust has been since removed to a piece of ground recently purchased by the foreign residents for a cemetery. "We hope," says he, "to make our new burying-ground somewhat like such a place at home, where occasionally we may walk, and call back to memory the lives of those we loved." There the place of his grave is marked, according to the terms of

his will, by a modest head-stone, bearing the following simple legend:—

TO THE MEMORY
OF THE
REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS, A.M.,
MISSIONARY TO THE CHINESE,
From the Presbyterian Church in England.
Born at Dun, Scotland, April 1st, 1815.
Arrived in China, November 1847.
Died at Port of Nieu-chwang,
4th April, 1868.
II. CORINTHIANS, CHAP. V.

His beloved colleague Mr. Douglas, who on hearing of the critical nature of his illness, had hastened from Amoy, that he might minister to him in his time of need, found on his arrival that he had already—two months before—passed away, leaving behind him a general sentiment of deep and reverential sorrow both among the European and native residents, conspicuous among whom was his faithful assistant Wang, who still wore the long queue and the unshaven beard, after the manner of his people in their deepest mourning for a father or a mother.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

"SO your loved and honoured William," wrote the Rev. Charles Brown to his mother, on hearing the tidings of his death, "has obtained the fulfilment of Christ's prayer, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' I am confident that amid the sorrow of your great loss, you are enabled to give thanks and say, 'It is the Lord:' 'It is well.' He makes no mistake as to the time, or the place, or the way of removing his servants to be with himself. Your dear William's history has, in fact, been one so palpably stamped with the signatures of a divine leading, that it were unlawful to entertain a doubt that the Lord just saw his work *done*, and the time, for him, of the everlasting rest arrived. I confess that I was quite unprepared for the tidings. I had dreamed that there remained for William a time of coming home (necessitated of course by his serious illness); that you would have the happiness of embracing him once more; that we should all see again his grave benevolent countenance; and that the Church and the cause of China and her missions might be greatly benefited. But

now that the Lord has given his own unerring decision, I think I can see things that go to reconcile me to it, even apart from its simple unerringness as given by *Him*. I am not sure that William would have taken kindly to going up and down this country and *talking*. China and its labours, far from the ear and eye of man, was his sphere. He had literally *buried* himself in that vast land —a noble, living burial! No doubt, also, his system was spent. He had done his work (not a *short* one, be it remembered) in such a manner that even *his* robust constitution was undermined. And so things have just reached their natural close."

Doubtless this is the true reading of the matter, so far as it *can* be read by us on this side the vail. If now I must speak more of the character and work of my beloved and lamented brother, it must still be in the words of others; and for this there are abundant materials in the numerous and most touching tributes to his noble life and precious labours which have spontaneously come from every side. Of these it is fitting that I should quote first the words of his esteemed colleague and friend, the Rev. W. S. Swanson, in a sermon preached at Amoy shortly after receiving the tidings of his death:—"And now that his life has closed, so far as regards earth, it remains as a precious legacy to us who are left. In reviewing it, what shall we say were the main characteristics of this man? He was a thorough scholar, with a well-furnished and an active mind; he possessed in no ordinary degree a sound judgment, and a large amount of common sense; he was one of the ablest and most popular preachers of

his day; he was a man of great energy, indomitable perseverance, and of ardent zeal. But not these properties severally, nor all combined, seem to me to be the reason to account for the power he possessed, the success that followed his public work, or the mark he has left behind him.

"In personal intercourse with him one thing struck me above all others—his prayerfulness; and herein I believe we get some insight into his remarkable success and power. No matter what he did, or had to do, whether of importance or of a nature you might call trivial, he made it a matter of prayer. This prayerfulness of his seems to me to be the outstanding feature of his Christian life and his missionary work.

"Another very marked feature of his character was his faithfulness. You never could mistake what he was, nor whose servant he considered himself to be. He believed, as we all do, that Christ and the world could not amalgamate; and he was faithful to his belief. And what was the result? The testimony of those who care little for Christ and the things of his kingdom is unanimous in this, that he was a faithful, earnest, and consistent Christian; and this testimony they never withheld. Agree or not with him as they might, they did not fail to perceive, and were not slow to acknowledge, the faithfulness of the man to the great Master he served. This faithfulness made him sometimes seem harsh, it may be, to some, and not so regardful as they might have wished him to be of the feelings of others. But this could be thought only by those who did not know him. He was very tender, and

very chary of giving offence; but not so much so as to prevent him from denouncing where denunciation was needed, or rebuking where rebuke seemed to him to be required.

"There is one other point in his character to which I must refer, and then I have done. To many he seemed eccentric, and to some morose. He was neither. There might be some shadow of seeming evidence for the former; there was none for the latter. He set a high ideal before himself as the ideal of the Christian missionary; and he did not hesitate to adopt any mode of life, or to enter upon any course of action, that seemed to him to be necessary, or even beneficial, to the proper carrying on of the work he came to do. As I have said already, the motive from which he acted was always the same; and one hardly dared to blame him in matters of no importance whatever when this was known. And now when we look back on his history, we may perhaps be led to believe that even in regard to the mode and localities of his missionary life, he acted in the way which, in his case, and with his peculiar and most marked individuality, was calculated to be of most benefit."

The feature of his Christian life here first referred to, is so pre-eminently characteristic, that I am tempted to add the following words of another:—"Above all," says an able writer in the *Sunday at Home*, "Mr. Burns was a man of prayer. No one could be long in his company without discovering that. All the week long 'he filled the fountains of his spirit with prayer,' and on Sabbath the full fountain gave forth its abundant treasures. There was

a freshness, a simplicity, a scriptural force and directness in his prayers, that formed the best of all preparations for the discourse that was to follow. Out of doors, we have often felt, as we heard him preach, that the opening prayer of the service was like the ploughing up of the field, it so opened the heart, and quickened and informed the conscience; the sermon that followed was the sowing of the seed in the prepared soil; and the concluding prayer was like the after harrowing of the ground, fixing down the seed that had been sown."

To any one in the least degree acquainted with him, or who had come even for a day into casual contact with him, it would not have been needful to have said even this much in regard to that which was in truth so much a part of himself, as to be inseparable from his very idea. His whole life was literally a life of prayer, and his whole ministry a series of battles fought at the mercy-seat. A friend who was under the same roof with him the day before he began his labours in St. Peter's, tells me that after walking round the parish with one of the elders, whose guest he was, he shut himself up in his chamber, and was found long afterwards lying on his face in an agony of prayer—the source doubtless of the holy calm which so struck the hearers on the succeeding morning.[1] There is an entry in

[1] "I had the privilege of getting acquainted with him, at the commencement of his ministry in St. Peter's, Dundee, while he resided at The Crescent, with Mr. P. H. Thoms; in whose family I had been resident governess for several years. The day after he came to us, Mr. Thoms took him out to show him the boundaries of the parish, and to see a few of the people in St. Peter's district. They returned in the evening. Mr. Burns went to his room, and whilst

his journal, during the time of his residence in Edinburgh, which is perhaps too sacred to quote, but to which I cannot withhold a reference in this connection. He seems to have possessed a private key to the church of St. Luke's, and there we find him, at least on one occasion, "detained" a whole night in solitary prayer "before the Lord." Such incidents as these let us far into the secret of where his great strength lay.

The Rev. Dr. Talmage, of the American Board of Missions, who, along with his admirable and lamented colleague, Mr. Doty, knew him so well during his early labours at Amoy, adds one or two characteristic traits which his friends will delight to recognize:—"He was," he says, "very careful of his health, avoiding unnecessary exposure, abstemious in his diet, and very particular in regard to his clothing, guarding against sudden changes of temperature. Although living by himself, he made it a rule to take tea, and spend a part or the whole of the evening of every day of the week, except one, with some one of the missionary families. We all enjoyed greatly,

we waited for his coming down stairs to dinner, we heard a heavy groan. Thinking he had been taken ill, Mrs. Thoms ran up stairs, and found him lying on his face on the floor groaning before the Lord! He had gotten such an overwhelming sense of his responsibility for the souls of that people, that he could then think of nothing else. In his absence of mind, he had left his door partially open, which Mrs. Thoms shut; and we did not see him again till late in the evening, when he came for the family worship. His prayer then was one continued strain of self-loathing, and pleading for mercy through 'the blood of the Lamb of God.' It happened that his room was next to mine, and *all that night* I heard him still groaning in prayer!"

and felt profited by this social intercourse with him. . . . He also carefully watched the indications of Providence, expecting to be led in the right way. I may mention a fact to illustrate this. He had planned a visit with some of our native helpers to the island of Quemoy, situated on the north-east side of the entrance to Amoy harbour. The day appointed to go proved rainy; from this he gathered that he should go in some other direction. While meditating on this subject an inquirer from a village near Pechuia came to his room, and requested him to visit the region of his native place. This was forthwith decided on. On their way to the boat they were met by an elderly man, an inquirer, who, on learning in what direction they were going, told them that he had a son in business at the village of Pechuia, and invited them to go to his son's shop, who, he said, would give them a hearty welcome. Such were the leadings of Providence, by which the gospel was first carried to that region. The remarkable blessings which followed that visit are well known. . . .

"His greatest power in preaching seemed to me to consist in the manner in which he quoted the Holy Scriptures. In this I do not think that I have ever heard him surpassed. Hence, in labouring among the Chinese, it was over the native Christians and inquirers that he exerted his greatest influence for good.

"On this account it seemed to some (perhaps to all) of us that his labours would have been still more efficient if he had remained longer, or had settled down permanently in some one district of country, instead of pursuing so

desultory a course of labour. A man with his gifts, I should suppose, would be just adapted to a field of labour such as Amoy now is, where there are so many small churches and companies of inquirers scattered throughout the region, and where the good seed of the Word has been sown so widely. Such a field would have had more likeness to those fields in Scotland and Canada, where his labours had been so wonderfully blessed.

"I say *it seemed*, for knowing his earnestness in seeking the divine guidance, we dare not say that he did not obtain it.

"He was a great (not perhaps in the eyes of the world) and good man; but he regarded himself as having peculiarities, and did not think that others should adopt his plan of labour."

Of the style of his preaching at his best times, I cannot better speak than in the words of a writer already quoted:—"His voice was clear, full, and of a great compass and power. By nearly constant use, indoors and out, its finer tones were roughened when we heard it; but, for all the purposes of an evangelist, it was one of the finest we have ever heard. In preaching he used no notes, had but little action, and no art. His power was solely, humanly speaking, from the weight, clearness, abundance, and vigour of his matter, and from the vivid force of his own feelings and convictions of the truth of what he was uttering. He believed, and therefore spoke. God was visible to him as he preached; and so he soon became visible also to at least some of his hearers. He used but few illustrations, and when he did use them they were

short and telling. His style was firm, terse, Saxon, abounding in short sentences; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. Sometimes you would have thought, in listening to some of his solemn appeals, that you were hearing a new chapter of the Bible when first spoken by a living prophet. His manner was not only solemn, but pre-eminently solemnizing. Few—we might say none—that came to laugh remained long in the laughing mood. He was a man, whether in the pulpit or out of it whom you might treat many ways, but you could nowhere, nowhen, laugh at him. And if you tried to argue with him, you came away, if victorious in your own eyes, at least thoroughly conscious that you had grappled with no despicable, no common adversary. He was ever calm, cool, self-possessed. Preaching one day in Montreal Mr. Burns was roughly handled by a Popish crowd, some of whom threw stones, by one of which Mr. Burns was cut in the face. A party of the 93d Highlanders heard of the fracas, and rushed to the rescue, headed by one Hector M'Pherson, now labouring as a missionary at St. Martin's, near Perth, and to whom the preaching of Mr. Burns had been blessed. To the earnest inquiry of the soldier, 'What's all this?' Mr. Burns quietly wiped off the blood, and with a smile said, 'Never mind; it's only a little wound received in the Master's service.'[1] If in preaching, indoors or out, he was in any way interrupted, he was never flurried, and knew well how to turn any interruption to his own advantage. A friend has often graphically repeated

[1] This incident was mentioned before in Chapter X., but I give the extract unbroken for the sake of the additional trait here given.

to the writer an instance illustrative of this. Once on a fine summer Sabbath evening, he was preaching to a vast crowd at the approach to a railway station. A tall man, slightly intoxicated, in the outer edge of the crowd was rudely interrupting, and interjecting occasional comments, exciting the risibility of those around him. Mr. Burns paused a moment, turned his eyes on the man: 'You are tall and strong; but you are not too tall for a coffin, nor too strong for the worms! You are tall and strong; but not too tall for the grave, nor too strong for death! You are tall and strong; but you will soon have to stand forth, one of the crowd, before the great white throne; and how will you face the Judge of the whole earth! Tall and strong as you are, you cannot be hid from God; the rocks and mountains will not cover you; his all-seeing eye is on you now!' This was spoken with a slow deliberation that made every word tell, not only on the man, but on the crowd. 'It was absolutely withering and terrible,' our informant used to say; the man was sobered in one moment. He seemed to bow himself down, as if to hide himself from that eye, and became at once the most attentive, and eager, and respectful listener the preacher had."

In regard to the manner of his outer life, no man ever held himself more absolutely loose to the world, and to the things that are in the world. Literally he deemed not that anything that he possessed was his own, save only that he might use it in the service of Christ and human souls. Scrupulously exact and methodical in the use of his means, and rigid in his economy as regarded himself, he

was conspicuously bountiful and free-handed in the dispensation of them to others. His whole income, from the first day on which he had any income to the last, was thus spent, with the exception only of what was necessary to supply for himself the barest necessities of life, and an annual gift of love to his one surviving parent. He literally fulfilled his own ideal, as conveyed in words that have been often quoted:—"The happiest state of a Christian on earth seems to be this—that he should have *few wants*. If a man have Christ in his heart, and heaven before his eye, and only as much of temporal blessings as is just needful to carry him safely through life, then pain and sorrow have little to shoot at—such a man has very little to lose. To be in union with Him, who is the Shepherd of Israel, and to walk very near to Him who is a sun and shield—that comprehends all that a poor sinner requires to make him happy between this and heaven."

How vividly do I remember the moment, a little more than a year ago, when the trunk which had come home from China containing nearly all of property that he left behind him in the world was opened, amid a group of young and wondering faces,—a few sheets of Chinese printed matter, a Chinese and an English Bible, an old writing-case, one or two small books, a Chinese lantern, a single Chinese dress, and the blue flag of the "Gospel Boat." "Surely," whispered one little one amid the awestruck silence, "surely he must have been *very* poor!" There was One, we felt, standing amongst us, though unseen, who for his sake had been poorer still.

Of the results of his work in the Chinese field it is diffi-

cult to speak. Undoubtedly his life there was far more powerful as an influence than as an agency. It was not so much by what he said, or by what he did, as by what he was, that he made his presence felt over so wide a surface of that vast land, and that "being dead, he yet speaketh." "I never expect to see his like again," says an esteemed missionary of another communion, who only knew him for a very short time. "We are all, as I believe, serving God in our divine vocations, with greater gladness, and more fervid zeal, from having communed with your brother in his heavenly walk and noble aspirations." "Know him, sir?" exclaimed another, with almost indignant surprise, when asked if he knew a brother missionary of the name of William Burns, "all China knows him; he is the holiest man alive." His life, in short, was "a sign" to all who came in contact with him, and in the face of a luxurious and self-indulgent age, of an absolute consecration of heart to God, which knew no reserves, flinched from no sacrifices, and in very deed counted all things loss for Christ. In fine, to use the words of the Rev. James Johnston, once his colleague in mission work, and since for many years the esteemed secretary of the Scottish Committee:—"Reckoned by the number of conversions under his direct preaching, the results are small; measured by the effect of his personal influence, the results are great. From the nature of the work for which he was specially qualified, and to which he entirely gave himself—that of a pioneer or evangelist—he could not expect to reap the fruits himself. His work was to break up the ground and sow the seed, not to gather the harvest. No man in this

age, so far as we know, has so entirely devoted himself to this self-denying work. Again and again has our departed brother laboured for years in some dark and unpromising field, and just when the first streak of dawn appeared on the horizon, he would leave another to enjoy the glorious sun-rise, while he buried himself in some other region sunk in heathen darkness. Again and again have we seen him thus in prayers and tears sowing the precious seed, and as soon as he saw the green shoots appear above the dark soil, he would leave to others the arduous yet happy task of reaping the harvest, and begin again his appointed work in breaking up the fallow-ground. The full extent of his great life-work will not be known until that day when 'he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.' The faith and patience of this devoted servant of God is an example to the Church, and to every labourer in the Lord's vineyard, teaching us not to live upon the stimulus of a present success, even in the conversion of souls. No man enjoyed so great success as he did, or thirsted for the salvation of sinners with more intense longing than he, yet have we seen him labouring for seven years, according to his own testimony, 'without seeing one soul brought to Christ;' yet labouring on only with increased diligence and prayer, until he saw, as he shortly did, the awakening at Pechuia, which reminded him of Kilsyth. His influence in this way has been extended over a larger field, and with his strongly marked individuality he left the impress of his character and piety wherever he went. Missionaries felt it, and blessed God for even a casual acquaintance with William Burns; converts

felt it, and have been heard to say that they got their idea of what the Saviour was on earth from the holy calm and warm love, and earnest zeal of Mr. Burns' 'walk with God.' The converts in many parts of China, and their children, will remember his high type of piety. His many translations of Scripture and sacred books, like the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Line upon Line*, will prove a rich legacy to the Church, and his psalms and hymns in different dialects will help the faith and fan the love of the Christian disciples, and spread abroad the Saviour's name among the heathen in the new songs sung in their hearing by the converts at their work, or by the way, and in their worship in the church and family. As a mission, we bless God for all that our departed brother was, and for all that he did. He was God's gift to us, and while we fondly looked forward to a longer life, and further conquests in the new and vast region on which he had entered with impaired strength but undiminished zeal, we bow to our Father's will in his removal on the 4th of April. His grave stands on the borders of the great kingdom of Manchuria, the advanced post of Christian conquests, beyond the northern limits of China. The little mound casts its shadow over many lands, for where is Burns not loved and mourned? But his life is the Church's legacy, and loudly calls for self-sacrifice and devotion to the cause of Christ, and especially the cause of missions. His indomitable spirit beckons us to the field of conflict and of victory, while his four last converts, the conquest of his death-bed, stand like sentinels by his grave, and pray and long for the advance of the Church's hosts."

In stature he was about the middle height, of strong, muscular, and well-knit frame, and with a ruddy and pleasant countenance, which is but faintly recalled by the worn and aged features of his Chinese picture, but which will doubtless appear again in glorified form when He comes who maketh all things new.

IN MEMORIAM.

As gazed the prophet on the ascending car,
Swept by its fiery steeds away and far,
So, with the burning tear and flashing eye,
I trace thy glorious pathway to the sky.
Lone like the Tishbite, as the Baptist bold,
Cast in a rare and apostolic mould;
Earnest, unselfish, consecrated, true,
With nothing but the noblest end in view;
Choosing to toil in distant fields unsown,
Contented to be poor and little known,
Faithful to death. O man of God, well done!
Thy fight is ended, and thy crown is won.
God shall have all the glory! Only GRACE
Made thee to differ. Let us man abase!
With deep, emphatic tone thy dying word,
Thy last, was this—"Thine is the kingdom, Lord,
The power, and glory!" Thus the *final* flame
Of the burnt-offering to Jehovah's name
Ascended from the altar! Life thus given
To God, must have its secret springs in heaven.
O WILLIAM BURNS! we will not call thee dead,
Though lies thy body in its narrow bed
In far-off China. Though Manchuria keeps
Thy dust, which in the Lord securely sleeps,
Thy spirit *lives* with Jesus: and where He,
Thy Master, dwells, 'tis meet that thou shouldst be.

There is no death in his divine embrace!
There is no life but where they see His face!
And now, Lord, let thy servant's mantle fall
Upon another! Since thy solemn call
To preach the truth in China has been heard,
Grant that a double portion be conferred
Of the same spirit on the gentler head
Of some Elisha, who may raise the dead,
And fill the widow's cruse, and heal the spring,
And make the desolate of heart to sing;
And stand, though feeble, fearless, since he knows
Thy host angelic guards him from his foes;
Whose life an image fairer still might be
Of Christ of Nazareth and Galilee—
Of thine, O spotless Lamb of Calvary!
China, I breathe for thee a brother's prayer:
Unnumbered are thy millions. Father, hear
The groans we cannot! Oh, thine arm make bare,
And reap thy harvest of salvation there.
The fulness of the Gentiles, like a sea
Immense, O God, be gathered unto Thee!
Then Israel save; and with his saintly train,
Send us Immanuel over all to reign!

H. GRATTAN GUINNESS.

APPENDIX.

I.

(See page 129.)

FIRST BEGINNINGS OF THE REVIVAL WORK.

The following extract from a deeply interesting letter, addressed by Mr. Burns to Mr. M'Cheyne, and which has come into my hands after this work had nearly passed through the press, will be read with deep interest, as throwing much light on the very first beginnings of the revival movement of 1839, both in his own soul, and in the scenes of his earliest ministry:—

"DUNDEE, *Nov. 18th*, 1839.—DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS CHRIST,—After having forcibly withdrawn myself from many other pressing engagements in order to write a few lines to you, I experience the greatest difficulty in making a commencement, from the multitude and variety of the thoughts which rise to view before me. Indeed everything connected with the whole period of my residence here, since April last—a period the most remarkable *but one* (that of conversion) in my own life, and all the thoughts and feelings growing out of these—embarrass and oppress my mind so much, that I hardly know what to begin with first.

"God's wonderful and most merciful procedure towards *me*, in connecting me with you and your dearly beloved flock in Dundee, I saw unspeakable cause to admire from the very first moment that that connection was formed. I felt myself not only *without*, but almost *against* my own intentions, at once drawn into the most endearing union with one of the few ministers in Scotland that I had seen cause to regard as making 'full proof' of the ministry of the gospel of Jesus, and one of the few congregations that I had ever heard spoken of as really deriving *visible* saving benefits from the labours of their pastor. These things made me astonished at the mercies of my God and Saviour from the very first; but *now*, when, after the lapse of seven months, I have been allowed to see at least some part of the development of the Lord's designs in this matter, I know not what to say, or how to speak. I feel almost as if it were my duty to be

silent in adoring wonder, and leave that theme for the harps of the heavenly Jerusalem, which I can but dishonour while my mind is so blind, my heart so cold, and my mouth so little accustomed to the matchless praises of Jehovah.

"When I came among your people I found such evidences of the Lord's work, in convincing and converting sinners, as was truly refreshing to my soul, after having spent *more than seven years* from the time when, if ever, I was brought to know the Lord, without, alas! ever seeing so much *as a single case* of open and visible transition from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. I knew a few, who, I had reason to think, had really been brought by the Spirit to the knowledge of Jesus, and a few more who, I hoped, had reached the *extreme edge* of the *safe* side of that line which divides the kingdom of Satan from the kingdom of God; but, an awakened sinner seeking after Jesus with the whole heart, I do not remember to have *ever* seen, from the time when I began to feel an interest in looking for such evidences of the Spirit's presence, until, in the astonishing, free, infinite, and sovereign mercy of my matchless Redeemer and Lord, I was sent to your beloved and favoured flock. Here I found not a few who seemed to have passed from death to life under your ministry, and who, in addition, had got beyond that ice-cold region of formal profession, in which even those who are alive to God are in general afraid to speak, as it were, *above their breath*, of any of those gracious exercises of the regenerate soul, which so much offend, because they so holily condemn, a secure but godless generation of carnal professors. From the atmosphere into which I at once discovered the Lord had brought me, when I entered your church, I learned that there were not a few to whose conversation, as well as to whose minds and hearts, their own state as sinners under a glorious dispensation of divine grace was become familiar. I almost immediately invited from the pulpit, all those who were under any anxiety about their souls, and might wish private direction, to call on me at particular hours for this purpose; and I soon learned from the intercourse to which this led in many instances, that the necessity of union to Jesus, and entire dedication to his service and his glory, was a truth to which the mind of the congregation *in general* had been brought under your ministry to yield *assent*, and one which, through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, not a few seemed to have savingly realized in their consciences and hearts. Excited by my intercourse of this kind (the *only* kind, with little exception, that I have had) with your people, *and sup-*

ported by the prayers of God's children among them, I prosecuted my labours among them during the first four months of my residence here with great benefit and pleasure to myself, and not without a pleasing testimony in the consciences and hearts of many of the people of the Lord, that I was really teaching some part of the truth 'as it is in Jesus.' Besides preaching on Sabbath at the usual times, I continued the Thursday prayer-meeting, and the male and female classes, which were all attended, as far as I could find, by about the same number as during your own ministry, and seemed to the outward view to make interesting and encouraging progress. There was one thing, however, that always *appalled* me, when I was enabled to *realize* the necessity of the second birth, that so few seemed under my ministry to be awakened to a solemn and *supreme* concern about their souls, though I had every reason to believe that there were hundreds in the congregation and parish, who, with a name to live, were in reality '*dead* in trespasses and sins.' Many seemed interested, and some of the people of God appeared to be refreshed, but very few, indeed only two or three persons, awakened for the first time from the sleep of carnal security, came to me in anxiety for direction in the way to Zion. I sought to declare the truth of God, both in the law and the gospel, with all faithfulness on every occasion, and to 'labour fervently in prayer to God' in behalf of the people at all times; but still there was no appearance of a general awakening among them to the sense of their natural state of sin and misery, and of their absolute need of the glorious Saviour who is offered freely to sinners in the gospel. I always felt as if the ground which was won from the enemy on Sabbath was lost during the following week. Many of the people I feared were in danger of thinking of whatever was said to them as doctrine suited to the pulpit and the Sabbath, but not to be considered true, and of supreme importance, on week-days and at their ordinary business; and thus, however plainly their state was taught, and however urgently they were besought to flee to the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour, they seemed still in general to continue going on in the beaten track of their ungodliness, impenitence, and unbelief. There were a few fellowship meetings in the parish while you were here, and these had increased but very inconsiderably in number and size. Still there were at the time when I was called to leave the people, in order to attend at my father's communion, some indications of an approaching revival of the work of God among them. There appeared to be an increasing earnestness in desire and prayer among

the people of God, and especially, I think, among the younger Christians, who had been brought to Christ under your own ministry, for a larger outpouring of the Spirit of God, and a more general awakening and converting of souls to Jesus. I remember of being told also, at the time when I was going away to Kilsyth, by a person to whom I had been lamenting the little success that seemed to attend the preaching of the Word, that she had seen several persons from time to time around her shedding tears upon the Sabbath; and the very last time that I met the young men's class before my departure, I was encouraged by noticing more than usual solemnity among all, and one young man in particular, who has since, I trust, been savingly converted, weeping profusely, while I was pressing the necessity of a full and immediate acceptance of the Lord Jesus.

"I left Dundee upon Tuesday, the 16th July, intending to return to it on the 24th, after attending at the communion, which was to be dispensed at Kilsyth on the 21st of that month. But the marvellous outpouring of the Spirit of God, which was witnessed on Tuesday, the 23d, having made it appear to many inexpedient for me to leave so soon that favoured parish, I remained there for a fortnight longer, and only returned to Dundee upon Wednesday, the 8th of August. In my absence Mr. Lyon, missionary at Banton, in the parish of Kilsyth, came over to Dundee and officiated for me; and I found on my return, as was natural, that the accounts which had been brought to them by Mr. Lyon, of what he had witnessed on that ever-memorable Tuesday at Kilsyth, together with the fact of my being detained from returning to them in consequence of being employed as an instrument in the Lord's work in another place, had produced so deep an impression as seemed eminently to prepare the way for the commencement of a similar work among themselves. However, I cannot say that I returned to Dundee with this distinct expectation, which I was in some degree kept from entertaining by a full conviction that the work at Kilsyth was almost entirely dependent for its origin *on the prayers of God's people there*, which had been for some time incessant and most fervent; and that it was in *a very inferior degree*, indeed, connected with any particular instrument employed in preaching the gospel. I entertained perhaps less hope of an outpouring of the Spirit on the people at my return, also, because I was inclined to think, as other people thought, that I must be exhausted by the incessant labours of the preceding fortnight, and I had rather the idea of taking rest on my return, than of then beginning, and from that time continuing to labour day by day as con-

stantly, and in the same glorious and blessed work, as I had been engaged in at Kilsyth.

. . . . . .

"It will be painful for me to part with your people; but it will be as pleasant as it could be made when I leave them in your hands as their pastor under the chief Shepherd. I pray, as many of them are doing, that your expected meeting with them on Thursday night may be blessed for the awakening and conversion of many souls. Your letters when absent were much blessed, and not least the two last, which, though they contained less perhaps that was directly hortatory, yet, coming at a time when *little goes far*, they were the means of awakening some that I have met with. But most of all do I believe that your prayers for your people have been answered in this work of the Lord. Indeed, I do not know how far dependent it may be all found to be on your wrestlings in the Holy Spirit in behalf of your flock, both while among them, and while absent on the Lord's *chosen* errand.

"Glory, glory, glory to the Lord Jehovah! 'Ye angels that excel in strength, praise him!'

"'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' 'The Lord Jesus be with thy spirit.' Amen.

"Your humble brother in the Beloved,

(Signed) WM. C. BURNS.

'Rev. R. M. M'CHEYNE, 20 Hill Street, Edinburgh."

II.

(See page 96.)

SERMON PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF KILSYTH, ON TUESDAY, 23D JULY, 1839.[1]

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."—Ps. cx. 3.

The will, my friends, is the ruling faculty in the soul of man, and a man's character is very much determined by the prevailing bent of this power within him. It is the office, you know, of the memory to recollect what is past; it is the office of the fancy to plan and devise

[1] These notes only exhibit the substance of a discourse which was greatly expanded and lightened up in the delivery. They may, however, serve to illustrate the *kind* of instruction, so far as the substance is concerned, on which the revival movement of that day might be said to rest.

what is new; it is the office of the understanding to deliberate, of the conscience to pronounce the law of right and wrong, of the desires and affections to draw and impel, and above all these the will sits, as it were, supreme, pronouncing the final decision, and thus determining what is to be done. If you get a man's will, you have him on your side, and may reckon on his support; whereas, though you may convince his understanding and delight his fancy, and move his affections, yet if his will remains opposed to you, he takes part against you. And thus, my friends, the state of the will is always made a matter of the first importance in inquiring into the position in which the soul of a man stands with regard to God. It is the crowning part of man's depravity that his will is opposed to the will of God; that he does that which God forbids, and leaves undone that which God commands. Jehovah says, "Thou shalt;" man impiously answers in his practice, if not in words, "I will not." Jehovah says, "Thou shalt not;" man again replies, "I will," thus seeking to be independent of Jehovah—to be as God, giving law to himself, and following his own will, instead of receiving the holy law of his Creator, and making it the guide of all his resolutions. This is the state of the fallen soul by nature; and therefore, my friends, when God brings back in his infinite love the souls of his elect people to his service, he makes them willing. He has exalted, as you find from this psalm, the Lord Jesus as mediator to the right hand of universal power; and while he promises to Messiah that his enemies shall be made his footstool, he promises that those elect ones whom the Father gave him to redeem, and whom he purchased to himself with his own blood, shall be willing, inasmuch as when the will is once renewed, and brought into the service of Jesus, the way is prepared for every other faculty being restored to holiness, and every thought being brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

In this promise two things, you perceive, require explanation: I. The nature of this willingness which Jehovah promises Christ's people shall have; and, II. The nature of that day of Jesus' power in which this is to be accomplished. In endeavouring to explain the former of these topics, I remark—

1st. Christ's people are willing to be saved by his imputed righteousness. This willingness appears to unconverted sinners as though it were not difficult to be attained; and many who are entirely unrenewed have the confidence that they possess it. They know that they are sinners, and being afraid, especially in times of distress and

in the near prospect of death, of the wrath of a holy God, they most gladly cling to anything which affords them the prospect of safety, and thus, out of a mere desire for deliverance from hell, they would be very glad that the righteousness of Christ were accounted theirs, and that they should thus obtain forgiveness. This is in substance the kind of willingness for Christ's righteousness that ungodly sinners possess, and not as if it were a saving appropriation of Jesus. But, my friends, though the faith of most persons who profess to follow Christ is little better than this universal desire for deliverance from pain produces, this is far different indeed from that willingness for Christ's imputed righteousness which his true people have. For observe, among other things, that in the willingness of the unconverted soul for Christ's righteousness there is no true and humbling conviction of personal unrighteousness. The sinner may see that God will accept nothing that he has done, and that he will charge him with the omission of thousands of duties, but then he does not feel nor acknowledge from the heart the propriety of God's doing so; he does not humbly pass sentence against himself according to the judgment of God, but proudly thinks, at least in his own breast, that there is no such heinousness in his sin as that it would be unworthy of God and a stain upon his holiness if he should be pardoned. And then again, though he may desire the benefit of Jesus' obedience, he has no true esteem for that obedience itself, he sees no glory in it, nor any such sufficiency in it that at the command of God he will venture his soul's eternity upon it and it alone; and so you always find that though such sinners profess that Christ is all their hope, they are unwilling to be convinced of their being great and flagrant sinners, and plainly discover that their chief trust is founded, not upon what Christ has done, but upon what they are themselves. On the contrary, when there is a true willingness to be saved by the imputed righteous of Christ, the soul is truly convinced of sin, and feels assured that it cannot be saved by any efforts of its own, and that it were glorifying to God's holiness and justice to cast it for ever from his sight into the place of punishment; and then again, the soul while it sees itself all vile, has obtained some discoveries of the glorious perfection of the work of Jesus, its superlative excellence in the sight of God, and rejoices in the thought of being allowed to rest on this for salvation, not only because it is sufficient to procure its deliverance from wrath, but because it also gloriously satisfies the demands of God's justice, and vindicates the honour of his holiness. But—

2d. Christ's people are willing to be brought into subjection to his kingly power. This is a still more clear and decisive mark of a true convert than the one which we have just been noticing. Those who desire Christ's righteousness merely from carnal motives, without any humbling knowledge of themselves, or any just esteem for its excellence, will always be found to shun the yoke of Christ. The end of their religion is peace; and if peace could be got without true conversion to the love of God, they would never seek after an attainment which is much too holy for their taste. In every heart, however, which Christ makes willing, there is a supreme desire to be brought under dominion to Christ's love, a holy hatred of all sin, and a real longing that Christ would come and set free the heart from every lust, and passion, and idol which oppose the law of God, and dispute the supreme place with him in its affections. It is true, as all real converts know, and as the Lord has so fully taught us by St. Paul, that the power of sin in the soul, though broken, is not destroyed, that the flesh warreth against the Spirit, and that not unfrequently the will, which is but partly renewed, seems to consent to sin. But even in such cases the man sins with a divided will; there is a secret wrestling against that desire which is for the time superior, and after a time the holy, spiritual will shows its supremacy, and the soul is humbled in deeper self-loathing and contrition in proportion to the degree in which it has backslidden from God. The soul of the true believer, though it is not free from sin, would be free entirely and for ever if a resolution of the will could give sin its death-blow. However, it is not so. Though the will be renewed, sin still dwells in the members. The believer would do good, and yet evil is present with him; he delights in the law of God after the inward man, and being unwillingly detained in bondage, he cries out with the apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and willingly adds, rejoicing in Christ's kingly power to deliver him from sin, "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." But—

3d. Christ's true people are willing to bear the cross in following him. It is one of the marks, you know, which Christ gives of the stony-ground hearers, that in times of persecution they fall away; but it is not so with Christ's true people. In giving themselves up to him they make no reserve, and are well satisfied to have him instead of all else that the world counts dear, and even at the expense of life itself. This last great sacrifice we are not at present called to make, but there are many others that still remain for God's people to

try the reality of their attachment to Jesus, and the value which they set upon him. They are often called to confess his name before his enemies, and those who are his professed but false-hearted friends; and many other trials they must endure, especially in the first days of their new life, when old companions observe the change of their character, and try every art, by means of smiles and frowns, and bribes and reproaches, to draw them back into their former ways; but in all such cases the true convert is willing to bear the cross. He finds it hard and painful, but easy in comparison to parting with Jesus. He naturally fears and shrinks from suffering, but by grace he still more fears and shrinks from sin; and if there is no alternative but either to deny his Master or die for his name, he is enabled to be faithful still, yea, to rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for his holy and blessed name.

We proceed now, however, in the second place, to remark regarding the day of Jesus' power here spoken of—

1st. This day is the time of his exaltation to the mediatorial throne. It is on this throne, you perceive, that in this psalm he is spoken of as sitting as a priest and as a king; it is on this throne, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, that he wields the sceptre of universal dominion, and that he rules in the midst of his enemies on earth; and it is from this that he sends forth that power which makes his people willing to obey him. Jesus, you know, exercised his kingly power even before he came in the flesh and offered up that sacrifice on account of which the Father exalted him, and thus the saints under the Old Testament were brought in subjection to his law. But it is most properly after Christ ascended up on high that he received all power in heaven and on earth, and therefore the latter days, or the times which reach from his ascension to his second coming, are more properly called the day of his power, and it is in these, accordingly, that the great multitude of his redeemed are gathered under his sceptre. In these times, my friends, blessed be God, we are privileged to live, and are therefore called to look for the fulfilment of the glorious promises that relate to it and to it alone. But—

2d. It is the day of Christ's power when the gospel is fully and freely preached. The gospel of Christ is called the *power* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. And it receives this grand appellation because it reveals Christ crucified, who, though he be to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, is yet to them that believe,

both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. And thus you see, my friends, that whenever the Lord intends to grant a day of his saving power to sinners, he raises up and sends forth ministers who determine with St. Paul to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. When God is frowning upon a people he does not always remove the public ordinances from among them, but withdrawing the teaching of his Spirit from those who come forward to preach his word, the pulpits become filled with men who know little or nothing of the power of God in their own hearts, and thus, though the preacher may study with diligence, and discuss with all the power of argument, and learning, and eloquence, that preaching of the cross which is to them that perish foolishness, is wanting, the glories of Jesus' person and of Jesus' work, with all the rest of his unsearchable riches, are forgotten, or but slightly and seldom touched; and thus, though the minister may preach and the people hear from day to day, the power of God is awanting, and souls perish unconvinced and unconverted. When, however, the Lord in his mercy returns to a nation or a city to gather out of them a people for his name, he raises up ambassadors who know from personal experience the evil and the guilt of sin, and have been led by the Spirit to rejoice in Jesus as all their salvation and as all their desire, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. And then, my friends, the matchless glories of Emmanuel are displayed, his preciousness is opened up, his love to sinners, and his willingness to receive with the open arms of his infinite love all that feel their ruined condition and are anxious for deliverance, are proclaimed and magnified; and thus a day of grace from on high is introduced, sinners are awakened, and are drawn to receive the Lord Jesus, being made "willing in the day of his power." But—

3d. This leads me to notice, in the last place, that the day of Christ's power is the time of the outpouring of his Spirit. The doctrine of Christ crucified is called the power of God, because it is the instrument which God employs in pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan. But yet, my friends, this doctrine is, after all, but an instrument which cannot be effectual unless when it is wielded by the almighty Spirit of God, by whose divine agency it is alone that sinners are loosed from the bondage of Satan, and brought into the glorious liberty of God's children. Often is this great truth demonstrated in the experience of every Christian, and especially of every Christian minister. The truth of the gospel is often preached with

clearness, fulness, earnestness, and affection, sinners are taught their ruined and perishing condition under the broken covenant of works, and Christ is freely held out to them and urgently pressed upon them, and yet they remain despisers and rejectors of the Lord from heaven, and the minister of Christ is often found in sadness to exclaim, Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? The people hear, and are perhaps attentive, and begin to reform many of those sinful practices in which they formerly indulged, but yet their hearts remain unconvinced of sin, and unenlightened in the glorious knowledge of Christ, and unconverted to God, there is still little seeking of Christ in secret prayer, little alarm experienced on account of sin, and few serious efforts to receive the Lord Jesus as he is freely offered. But, oh, how changed is the scene when the Spirit is outpoured! Then the hearts of God's people become full to overflowing with love to Jesus, and are drawn forth in vehement desires, after his glorious appearing, to build up Zion. They are much in secret, and much in united prayer, and are cheered by the gladdening hope that the Lord is soon to listen to the groaning of the prisoner, and save those that are appointed unto death. The ministers of God, also, are in general particularly enlivened and refreshed in their own souls. In private they are deeply humbled in soul before the Lord, and have an uncommon measure of the Spirit of supplication for sinners given them, with ardent love to Christ, melting compassion for perishing souls, and vehement desires for their salvation; and then, when they come to preach Jesus, they are evidently anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, they speak with holy unction, earnestness, and affection, and sometimes hardly know how to leave off beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God. And then observe the frame of the hearers at such a time. Formerly no terror could awaken them from their sleep of death, they still said, Peace and safety, though sudden destruction was coming upon them; but now a few words are enough to pierce their inmost heart, and make them cry out often aloud and against their will, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Formerly Jesus was held forth and was despised, but now every word that tells of his love is precious, his name is as ointment poured forth, and sinners are filled with an agony of desire for a saving union unto him. Men, and women, and children retire from the house of God, not to profane the evening of God's day in idle talk or idle strolling. They have much business to do with God. Their doors are shut, their Bibles are in their hands, or they are crying to God

upon their knees as they are conversing with the godly, and obtaining the benefit of their counsel to guide them on the way to Jesus. These, my friends, are, you know, some of the marks of a day of the power of Jesus. When the Spirit is poured out from on high, and sinners' hearts are moved, the iron sinews of their necks are relaxed, and their brows of brass are crowned with shame; they flock to take shelter under his wings, like doves to their windows; they rejoice in his love as men that divide the spoil. Satan is discomfited, his captives are set free, and God is glorified. Such times of refreshing as these have been often experienced, and are destined to be still more gloriously displayed in coming times. Pentecost—Reformation—in Scotland, England, Ireland, particularly in Scotland—Shotts—Ayr—Irvine—Cambuslang—Kilsyth—Moulin—Glenlyon—Arran, and Skye.

HEADS OF APPLICATION.

1. We have cause to lament—few willing—little appearance of a day of power;—but cause also for joy and thankfulness—we live under the Pentecost times—we have had the gospel fully preached—and the Spirit has been sending you a few drops to excite a desire for more of his power.

2. Sinners! will not ye come to Jesus?—accept of his righteousness—submit to his blessed power—why not?—what have you worth comparing with his love? &c.—come, come, come!

3. Christians! are you desiring a day of power?—some of you stand in God's way—ye do not want a day of power—it would make you live more holily—expose you to more reproach, &c.—oh, shame! shame!—sinners perishing—Jesus despised, and yet you remain unconcerned. Pray, pray, pray—secretly, unitedly, fervently, with faith and importunity—"The Lord's hand is *not* shortened that," &c.—examples of the power of prayer—Shotts, Cambuslang, Kilsyth—time short—soon prayers at an end—removed from the footstool—power will come—but not by us—we shall be ashamed to meet our Lord! to look sinners in the face at judgment! &c.

Conclusion extempore—*Σὺν θεῷ, τῷ πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι, ᾧ μονῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.* Ἀμήν.

III.

(See page 185.)

THE ABERDEEN INQUIRY.

The following additional extracts from the Report will show the character of the testimonies to the depth, the extent, and permanent effects of the movement, which the queries of the Committee elicited:—

"As to the extent of this work of God," wrote the Rev. R. M'Cheyne, "I believe it is impossible to speak decidedly. The parish is situated in the suburb of a city containing 60,000 inhabitants. The work extended to individuals residing in all quarters of the town, and belonging to all ranks and denominations of the people. Many hundreds under deep concern for their souls have come, from first to last, to converse with the ministers; so that I am deeply persuaded the number of those who have received saving benefit is greater than any one will know till the judgment-day. . . .

"It is not easy for a minister, in a field like this, to keep an exact account of all the cases of awakening and conversion that occur; and there are many of which he may never hear. I have always tried to mark down the circumstances of each awakened soul that applied to me, and the number of these, from first to last, has been very great. During the autumn of 1839 not fewer than from 600 to 700 came to converse with the ministers about their souls; and there were many more equally concerned, who never came forward in this way. I know many who appear to have been converted, and yet have never come to me in private; and I am, every now and then, meeting with cases of which I never before heard. Indeed, eternity alone can reveal the true number of the Lord's hidden ones among us. . . .

"During the progress of this work of God, not only have many individuals been savingly converted, but important effects have also been produced upon the people generally. . . . It seems now to be allowed, even by the most ungodly, that there *is* such a thing as conversion. Men cannot any longer deny it. The Sabbath is now observed with greater reverence than it used to be; and there seems to be far more of a solemn awe upon the minds of men than formerly. I feel that I can now stop sinners in the midst of their open sin and wickedness, and command the irreverent attention, in a way that I could not have done before. The private meetings for

prayer have spread a sweet influence over the place. There is far more solemnity in the house of God; and it is a different thing to preach to the people now from what once it was. Any minister of spiritual feeling can discern that there are many praying people in the congregation. When I came first here, I found it impossible to establish Sabbath-schools on the local system; while, very lately, there were instituted with ease, nineteen such schools, that are well taught and well attended. . . .

"During the autumn of 1839 the meetings were in general dismissed at ten o'clock; although, in several instances, the state of the congregation seemed to be such as to demand that the ministers should remain still longer with them, that they might counsel and pray with the awakened. I have myself, once or twice, seen the service in the house of God continue till about midnight. On these occasions the emotion during the preaching of the word was so great, that after the blessing had been pronounced at the usual hour, the greater part of the people remained in their seats, or occupied the passages, so that it was impossible to leave them. In consequence of this a few words more were spoken suited to the state of awakened souls; singing and prayer filled up the rest of the time. In this way the meeting was prolonged by the very necessity of the case. On such occasions I have often longed that all the ministers in Scotland were present, that they might learn more deeply what the true end of our ministry is. I have never seen nor heard of anything indecorous at such meetings; and on all such occasions, the feelings that filled my soul were those of the most solemn awe, the deepest compassion for afflicted souls, and an unutterable sense of the hardness of my own heart. I do entirely and solemnly approve of such meetings, because I believe them to be in accordance with the word of God, to be pervaded by the Spirit of Christ, and to be oft-times the birth-places of precious never-dying souls. It is my earnest prayer that we may yet see greater things than these in all parts of Scotland." . . .

The movement in Perth was of rather more recent date, and therefore not so fully tested by time; but its results, so far as they had yet appeared, were equally satisfactory. "I had abundant opportunity," says the Rev. John Milne, "of becoming intimately acquainted with Mr. Burns, as he lived and laboured with me constantly for between three and four months. I never knew any one who so fully and unfalteringly obeyed the apostolic precept, 'Meditate upon these things, give thyself *wholly* to them.' I was struck

with his close walk with God, his much and earnest prayer, his habitual seriousness, the solemnizing effect which his presence seemed to have wherever he went, and his almost unvaried success in leading those with whom he conversed to anxious, practical, heart-searching concern about their state in God's sight. In public, his ministrations were chiefly of an awakening nature, addressed to the unconverted. . . .

"In compliance with the language of the query, I have spoken of the chief human instrument; but I am persuaded, both from what I saw and felt at the time, and from what I have since known of the permanent and blessed results, that a greater than man was among us; 'Not by power, nor by might, but by my Spirit.' I never witnessed before, nor have I since, such manifest tokens of God's gracious presence as were vouchsafed us during several of the first months of last year. I can only say in the words of Jonathan Edwards, 'The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary, God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable.—Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth.' What he also mentions of the much weeping and deep concern manifested under the preaching of the word, is also true in regard to the meetings here. . . .

"I had only been settled here a few weeks when the revival began, and consequently had little previous knowledge of the people. I have since, however, had intercourse with many. Some were godly persons before; but on these occasions they seem to have been literally revived and stirred up. They received enlarged and more realizing and influential views of their privileges and duties as Christians. The generality, however, were persons who had either been greatly careless of religion, or had been resting self-satisfied in a form of godliness, though destitute of its power. . . .

"Many are to this day *growingly* adorning the gospel of God their Saviour in all things, and gradually forming a peculiar people zealous of good works. I am acquainted with families where all or almost all the members seem to have been savingly converted."

To the same effect and equally emphatic were the testimonies of the Rev. Mr. Gray of Perth, Mr. Bonar of Collace, Mr. M'Donald, Blairgowrie, Mr. Cumming of Dunbarney, Mr. Paton of Ancrum, and other ministers of equal worth and high standing in the Church, who, while recognizing the occurrence of incidental errors of human

infirmity, united in bearing solemn witness to the solidity, preciousness, and enduring benefit of the sacred work itself.

The following valuable letter addressed to myself in the present year by the Rev. David Brown, D.D., Professor of Theology in the Free Church College, Aberdeen, on the retrospect of an entire generation, enables us still further to trace the history, by connecting the present with the past:—

"*Aberdeen, October 18th*, 1869.—MY DEAR DR. BURNS,—As my place of residence, during the remarkable religious movement which took place here in connection with your honoured and beloved brother's ministrations was at some distance from Aberdeen, I am not able to speak from personal knowledge either of its characteristics at the time, or of its permanent fruits. But being put in possession of nearly all that went on from week to week by friends on the spot, I considered myself nearly as well able to estimate its true character as those who were in the midst of it, the more especially as I was cognizant of the movements at Kilsyth and Perth, so very similar to that at Aberdeen, had studied the history of similar movements in former times, and took a lively interest in the subject. Thus furnished, I had no difficulty in recognizing in this movement the hand of God, touching the hearts of multitudes at once with a sense of sin and danger, with anxiety for salvation, and with wonder and delight as the way of escape from the wrath to come was laid open to them, turning many from darkness to light, from wretchedness to peace and joy in believing, and from sin to holiness in heart and life; and, what was even more manifest, giving to many real Christians a quickening, an enlargement, and a vigour unknown before.

"As to the permanent fruits of this work, from all I can learn it seems to have much resembled that of all similar movements. In other words, all that was mere religious excitement in it gradually disappeared, and what was only apparent conversion ended, in the case of some, unhappily, in others in mere outward improvement. But to be more explicit, (1) The minister in whose church Mr. Burns most laboured, Mr. Mitchell of Holburn, tells me that of about eighty young persons admitted by him at that time to the privileges of the Church, he can say with good confidence that one-half turned out decidedly well, and that of the other half, those who disappointed him did so for the most part in consequence of their 'yoking themselves unequally with unbelievers,' or marrying persons who had no sympathy with spiritual things. (2) Two of the elders of the late Mr. Parker of Bonaccord tell me that Mr. P., who was of all men

the furthest from religious enthusiasm, was induced to ask Mr. B. to officiate in his church from a strong impression that the Lord was remarkably with that young preacher; that when asked to put a stop to his proceedings, he went to judge for himself, and, as the result, refused to do so; and one of them said that when one of the ministers of the Presbytery, during the examination in this business, threw out some contemptuous insinuation against Mr. B., Mr. Parker exclaimed that he 'wondered that even a dog would wag his tongue at such a man.' The gentleman from whom I had this, I may add, taught a class of those who had got good under Mr. Burns, and another was taught by another of the gentlemen with whom I have spoken on this subject within the last few days, who bears the same testimony to the solidity of the work, testifying in particular how anxious Mr. B. was that the converts should be gathered and systematically instructed in Bible truth. Both these gentlemen are acting elders in our churches, and men of sober judgment. (3) I conclude with extracts from letters written to me by two of those I consulted a few days ago on this subject. The first is from one of the two just referred to:—'It is consistent with my knowledge that the fruit of the Rev. W. C. Burns' labours in this quarter is still to be seen, and it always cheered the hearts of those who used to hear his living voice, and were blessed through him, to read the accounts given from time to time of his work in China.' The other is more full. It is from one who taught a similar class or classes to that of the other two gentlemen, and has himself done much Christian work here and elsewhere:—'Agreeably to your request, I give my testimony to the permanency of the revival work begun under the ministry of the Rev. William Burns in Aberdeen nearly thirty years ago. Along with some others I had classes of young women, held in our own houses weekly, mine continuing for about three years with fluctuations. The classes were composed of those who professed to have been awakened at that time. They are now much scattered: but I have been privileged to attend the death-beds of some of them, and their end was peace—one indeed was triumphant. There are several whom I knew for years, some of them under very severe trials, which they bore with Christian meekness and resignation. Others went back to the world, and I have lost sight of them. I believe the great day alone will bring to light the fruits of his manifold and devoted labours in this quarter. The intelligence of his death brought sadness and sorrow to many a heart here.'—DAVID BROWN."

IV.

(See page 513.)

RECENT TROUBLES IN CHINA.

(To the Editor of the "Times.")

SIR,—In your leading articles on the Yang-chow troubles, published in December last, there are many serious errors, both as to principles and facts, fitted to do much injury to the cause of missions. Will you kindly allow me to point out these mistakes, and to indicate the correct principles of the question?

We are told to amalgamate Christian truth with the worship of ancestors and the whole body of Confucian doctrine, the advice being supported by such sentences as the following:—"In the sacred record we find that the first preachers of our faith . . . appealed to every belief and every feeling, not as false and hateful, to be condemned and destroyed, but as the foundation on which their own better teaching was to be raised, and with which it did in fact fuse itself." Now, as far as the beliefs and practices of the Chinese agree with those which are Christian, we heartily accept them, as, for instance, the greater part of the Confucian ethics. Wherever they present a half truth or an aspiration towards the truth (like the *Athenian* altar to the Unknown God), we gladly embrace the opportunity to develop the fulness of Christian doctrine, *e.g.* the ancient classical allusions to Shang-ti, the supreme lord of all. And where, in things *indifferent*, their customs vary from those recorded in Holy Scripture or customary among ourselves, we make no attempt to produce uniformity.

But when we meet with doctrines and customs distinctly opposed to the instructions and commands of God's most holy word, we can make no compromise. And the worship of *ancestors* is just one of those institutions with which compromise is impossible. The early Jesuit missionaries indeed permitted it to their converts, but as soon as the facts of the case were understood at Rome, it was solemnly condemned by the authority of the pope, at the risk of destroying that flourishing mission, supported by the favour of the great emperor Kang-hi, who warmly espoused the cause of the Jesuits. And if any church on earth could have accepted ancestral worship, it would have been the Church of Rome, with her prayers *for* the dead, and prayers *to* the dead. Surely it cannot be supposed that Protestant churches and Protestant missionaries have blindly followed the de-

cision of the pope; and yet with the most perfect unanimity they have all agreed with the view taken by the Church of Rome. For the worship of ancestors is in fact as thoroughly idolatrous as any idolatry, ancient or modern, classical or barbarian. It equally falls under the sweeping denunciation of that fundamental command given at first by God through Moses, and repeated by Christ himself:—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." With idolatry of any kind the apostles never permitted their better teaching to fuse itself. Paul, as he stood among the idols of Greece, on the hill of Mars, having plainly and solemnly rebuked all idolatry, added these words: "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commandeth *all men everywhere* to repent." So also at Lystra, he rent his clothes and ran in among the people saying, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God."

It is a mere caricature to represent us as teaching the Chinese "that their ancestors, if they exist at all, are not worth worshipping, and had best be forgotten;" for of course we throw no doubt on the continued existence of the spirits of their ancestors, but simply teach that, by the command of God, their worship is prohibited. And instead of saying that they had best be forgotten, we tell them that it is right to keep their tables of genealogy, and to preserve the memory of their ancestors, recompensing the benefits received from them by showing kindness to those who are descended from the same common stock, and reflecting honour upon them by the lustre of good and noble actions.

In religion also, so far is ancestral worship from being the "foundation," that it is only one of several independent systems which are strangely blended together in the present eclectic religion of the Chinese; and one of these other systems (the Buddhist) teaches that the very highest excellence and holiness consists in perpetual celibacy and the entire abnegation, both of all ancestral worship and of all the relationships of life—and this system of Buddhism is as widespread as Confucianism itself. It should also be remembered that the vast Mahomedan population, amounting to *many* millions scattered over the northern, central, and western provinces, is entirely free from ancestral worship—the precepts of the Koran condemning such idolatrous rites as strongly as do the teachings of the Bible. And yet very many Mahomedans rise to high rank and office in the empire.

But the proof that the Chinese have no such fanatical hatred against those who oppose ancestral worship—a proof most clear and conclusive—is to be found in the very history of these Yang-chow troubles. If the conspirators among the Chinese literati had merely charged the missionaries with disputing the infallibility of Confucius, and arguing against ancestral worship, they might have issued placards for centuries without being able to excite the people to violence: it was necessary to invent horrible stories of scooping out eyes, and bewitching people, poisoning men and boiling babies, &c., in order to produce the desired excitement. Precisely the same took place in the case of Formosa. The ill-affected among the literati found it quite impossible to incite the people to violence by charging us with heretical tendencies against Confucius and the ancestors; it was necessary to invent stories even more horrible than those circulated at Yang-chow; as, for instance, that the medical missionary rifled the graves of the bodies of the dead, and that he had poisoned a hundred persons, and hung up their dead bodies to be preserved on the walls of his hospital. About eight years ago my own life was in imminent danger at a town some thirty miles from this; but in order to raise a mob against me, it was necessary to invent the story that I had beaten a boy to death! And some years ago, when violent riots took place in Fuh-chow, the means of rousing the people was the circulation of reports (similar to those circulated against the early Christians of the Roman empire), that lascivious orgies took place in the chapels at the meetings of the converts.

Without such calumnious reports there could be no danger of riots on account of our arguments against ancestral worship and the other errors of the Confucian system. But we and our converts are entitled to protection, not only from the violence caused by such reports, but from the very circulation of these vile calumnies themselves.

Protection against brutal violence is what we ask, and all that we wish. It is most unfair to write as if any one desired "to carry on a crusade of fire and sword against superstition and false philosophy, to preach the gospel from the cannon's mouth, and force conviction down with the point of the bayonet;" what we ask is only protection in the exercise of our treaty rights, which, antecedently to treaty, are such as ought to be enjoyed by every missionary and every British subject.

But it seems as if even this protection is to be denied us, for two reasons: (1) as detrimental to the interests of British policy, and (2) as inconsistent with the character of missionary enterprise.

Is it then true that missionary work is calculated to involve our government in war, or in something like war? It only appears to be so, while in reality the attacks on missionaries are merely the symptoms of the dislike to foreign intercourse in general. Even in Consul Medhurst's negotiations with Tseng-Kwo-fan, there were several matters relating to trade (especially the illegal transit dues on foreign goods), which were discussed and adjusted at the same time with the Yang-chow troubles. And in the case of Formosa, so much did the non-missionary part of the grievance outweigh the missionary part, that it is out of the question to call the collision a "missionary trouble;" for it is notorious that, but for the mercantile and consular grievances, the assistance of a naval force would never have been called in at all; it being supposed that, when those matters had been satisfactorily adjusted, the mandarins would be easily led to do justice in the missionary case.

The fact is, that the presence of numerous missionaries in China is an influence on the side of peace and harmony. They are extensively known to be labouring for the good of the people; they submit patiently to petty annoyances and insults, which in the case of other foreigners would lead to quarrels and riots: they are generally acquainted with the language and customs of the people; and, as I myself in the course of the fourteen years I have spent in this country, have often experienced, can go and come safely where there would be much danger to other foreigners. There is no place in China where a better spirit prevails between Chinese and foreigners than at Peking itself, where, besides official personages and those connected with them, the foreign community may be said to consist of missionaries. I speak, of course, only of Protestant missionaries; for the intolerable pretensions and overbearing manner of the Roman Catholics have led both the government and the people to feel very differently towards them, and to distiñguish them very sharply from Protestants. It must be the R. C. missionaries to whom you refer, when you say, "Both in China and Japan the missionaries of our faith have always contributed largely to their own failure, by their imprudent conduct and extravagant pretensions." For the only Protestant missionaries who are, or have been in Japan, are Americans, who have most carefully avoided all occasion of collision with the Japanese; and, with the exception of the case of Mr. Taylor's party, now under discussion, no opponent of missions (and there are many such in the foreign communities in this country) has ever found

anything which could give even a plausible pretext for charging the Protestant missionaries with imprudent conduct and extravagant pretensions towards the Chinese.

Last year a copy was obtained of a most important state paper, written by the great Tseng-Kwo-fan, who is supposed to be the most powerful of all the *Chinese* mandarins, namely, a secret memorial to the emperor, giving his advice on the approaching revision of the treaty. In that document, while he advised that the making of railways, and several other foreign proposals with regard to trade, should be resisted to the very utmost, he counselled the toleration of missionaries, even in the interior of the empire.

Manifestly it is not missionary enterprise of which the Chinese are afraid, except so far as they confound it with other operations of foreigners. The real causes of dislike, suspicion, fear, and hatred, so far as such feelings exist, spring from a strange compound of bad political economy, and ignorant prejudice against foreign institutions, mingled with the rankling feeling of some real wrongs, and with singular superstitious terrors excited, not by the teaching of missionaries, but by the existing circumstances and avowed plans of commercial enterprise.

The people of the sea-board are offended at the extensive use of foreign ships and steamers, and the consequent decay of the junk trade. The provincial mandarins and their satellites are sorely annoyed at the foreign inspectorate of customs, because it makes it impossible for them to absorb (as they used to do) almost the whole of the duties, before they could find their way to the imperial treasury, the very cause which makes the central government highly pleased with that excellent institution; and they are excited by rumours of some extension of the inspectorate, whether by the opening of new ports, or by its application to other departments of revenue.

A general feeling of irritation is caused by the *opium trade*, graphically described as ruinous to the health, the morals, and the material prosperity of the people; by the coolie traffic, which, though now duly regulated by British and American law, has left bitter memories, and is still more or less carried on under some other flags; by report that foreigners mean to possess themselves of the empire; by the supercilious treatment of the Chinese by many foreigners (but not by the missionaries), treating them as an inferior race, often to the extent of hard blows; by the drunkenness and licentiousness of sailors, and not a few others; by the introduction of foreign teachers, artificers, and machines into several government schools and arsenals; and, perhaps,

worst of all, by the disturbance, actual and possible, present and future, of the all-important Fung-shuy, or geomantic principle of good fortune throughout the empire.

This last principle I despair of making intelligible to your readers in anything like its due proportions; suffice it to say, that the good fortune of all the living (including their health, wealth, prosperity, and their very life) depends on the auspicious position of their houses, and of the graves which are scattered over the whole surface of their country—their position, I say, in reference to eminences, such as other houses, rocks, trees, and mountains, and especially in reference to the continuity of mountains, ridges, and declivities, by which the auspicious influences are conducted from the summits to the happily situated houses and graves. This good fortune is grievously disturbed and deteriorated by the building of large warehouses, or dwelling-houses of more than one story, and by the construction of roads, and, it is firmly believed, will be utterly destroyed, if the projected mines, railways, and telegraphs should ever be actually realized.

In relation to such matter not only are the labours of missionaries *perfectly harmless*, but the dissemination of truth by their means is the most effectual mode of dispelling error, superstition, and prejudice, and of opening the way to true civilization.

But it is objected that the protection of missionaries is inconsistent with the character of their work, and with the example of the apostles. Of course no exact parallel can be found in the New Testament, for the simple reason, that neither then, nor for more than two centuries later, was there any Christian state to protect missionaries, or to extend its influence against persecution. But there is clear apostolic authority for this principle, that it is right to ask legal protection in the preaching of the gospel against unlawful violence. Witness the answers sent by Paul to the magistrates of Philippi—"They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and now do they thrust us out privately? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out;" and before he would leave the city he waited till the magistrates came and *besought* him, and even then he first entered into the house of Lydia, and comforted the disciples; thus obtaining a certain degree of reparation for the injury done, and also (through the fears of the magistrates) some measure of security for the converts from future molestation.

Witness also his repeated claims addressed to the chief captain and to the governor of Judea, on the ground of his Roman citizen-

ship, for protection against the fanatical violence of the Jews. And if it be unseemly for missionaries to be protected against murderous violence by British power, it must at least have been as unseemly for Paul to preach to the crowd in the temple court, from those stairs where he stood sheltered by the broad bucklers and bristling spears of the Roman soldiery.

If a mob make a riot in a church or chapel in England they are rightly punished. And if a ruffian beat a clergyman severely in his house, or on the road, the righteous punishment is not in the least mitigated because the sufferer is a minister of the gospel. And as the Chinese government has distinctly agreed to *protect* both those who *teach* Christianity and those who profess or practise it, it is equally proper to insist on their carrying out this article, which is both a natural duty and a treaty right.

It is, indeed, very beautiful to write about missionaries taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and laying down their lives (as other newspapers have said), and there are circumstances in which it is a duty to do so; but, *according to apostolic example*, the first duty is to use every lawful means for restraining the violence of wicked men. And I should like to hear from those who, in their snug parlours or comfortable offices, write these kind advices, in what respect that duty lies on missionaries abroad more than on clergymen or private Christians at home.

Mr. Dilke's letter, published in your issue of 26th December, is at first sight a most formidable document, crowded as it is with quotations from official papers and principles of international law. But though a high authority on literary questions he has failed to inform himself of the real state of matters in China; and so it happens that his facts, when correct, are in general irrelevant, while those statements and principles which seem to be relevant, are for the most part vitiated by some fatal inaccuracy. For instance, he actually relies on the order in council of 1843, which has been abrogated and annulled by the order in council of 1865; and not only so, but the clause he quotes from the said abrogated order is directly contradicted by the well-known clause in the present treaty, which permits merchants furnished with passports to travel anywhere for the purposes of trade, carrying their goods along with them.

In another paragraph Mr. Dilke coolly makes the statement—"On the side of China there is no reluctance to carry out the treaties." If such an assertion had been made by Mr. Burlinghame some sort of apology might have been offered for it, on the principle

that the holder of a brief need not be very particular about the truth of what he says on behalf of his client. Of course I cannot for a moment suppose that the writer meant to say what he knew to be incorrect; but the only other explanation I can make of a statement so notoriously and ludicrously erroneous is, that his knowledge of Chinese matters is very inadequate, with the exception of some one-sided information supplied probably (as I should conjecture from the internal evidence of the letter) by some one connected with the "Chinese Embassy."

As regards residence in the interior it is quite irrelevant to discuss the authenticity of the clause in the French convention, for that clause treats, not of residence, but of the *purchase of property* in the interior, a question not raised at all in the Yang-chow case.

The right of some measure of residence in the interior as claimed by Protestant missionaries rests mainly, (1) on the fact admitted even by Mr. Dilke:—"It is indeed clear from the words of several of the treaties that the right of travelling and preaching throughout China is granted to Protestant missionaries having passports;" and (2) on the notorious fact that missionaries of the Church of Rome (especially Frenchmen) are permitted to reside in the most distant parts of the interior. Of what use is a right on paper to travel and preach in the interior if it be impossible to rent a dwelling, or hire a lodging, or take chambers at an inn? And if riots such as these at Yang-chow and Formosa be permitted to go unpunished, ill-affected mandarins, literati, and gentry can easily find means of making disturbances whenever a foreigner stirs beyond the precincts of the treaty ports. Nor would the treaty ports themselves be safe, as appears from such examples as Chin-kiang, Kew-kiang, and Tai-wan-foo.

Again, the legality of missionary residence in the interior is a matter fully admitted by the Chinese officials themselves, who surely cannot be supposed to be too favourable to our cause. And even in the Yang-chow case the viceroy has all along admitted it, and promised to secure it by indemnity and proclamation, for the points disputed with the consul (not with the missionaries) were the *manner* of proclamation, the *amount* of indemnity, and the *measure* of punishment which would give *security for the future.*

The Chinese party in England themselves admit that it is right for our naval authorities to protect the persons of British subjects actually in danger. This admission is amply sufficient for our purpose; for the report of the Yang-chow outrage was rapidly and assiduously

spread through the empire; the people were everywhere exhorted to copy the glorious example of the brave men of Yang-chow, and it became manifest by many quickly accumulating proofs that, in *self-defence*, for the purposes of protecting the foreigners in other parts from similar violence, and the Chinese from the reprisals which would have necessarily followed, the only effectual plan was that of insisting on the speedy and condign punishment of the Yang-chow criminals. The houses near a fire must be pulled down or blown up to prevent the spread of a conflagration; and if the owners will not consent, the most sacred rights of property must be sacrificed to the common weal.

If the matter were not so serious it would be really amusing to hear learned editors and honourable members of parliament talking about simply applying the principles of the rights of nations to our relations with China. Why, the *first principle* of the "rights of nations" is broken by the right conceded to all the treaty powers, that their subjects or citizens in China, with their property and households, are exempted from the operation of Chinese law: and *that* because the courts of Chinese mandarins are so full of bribery, deceit, cruelty, torture, and all manner of injustice, that no civilized country will trust the life or property of its people in their hands. The Chinese government has not only shown no repentance for the abominable treachery of Soo-chow, but loads with honours the monster who butchered in cold blood the chiefs and troops who had surrendered on the plighted faith of a British colonel that their lives should be spared. All honour to Colonel Gordon for the righteous indignation he showed when he learned the terrible truth. All honour to the British government which in remembrance of that tragedy prohibits its subjects, under heavy penalties, from taking service in the Chinese army.

Are those persons who would subject us to the action of Chinese courts not aware that torture is used in the examination, not only of parties accused, but even of witnesses, and that persons whose conviction is desirable but difficult, are easily put out of the way by beating them to death (of course by mistake), under examination, or by starving them in prison? The foreign members even of the Chinese customs service are all under foreign protection, and not under Chinese law.

It also must be remembered that the viceroys of Chinese provinces are very slightly controlled by the supreme government. In the secret memorial of Tseng-Kwo-fan referred to above, he openly

tells the emperor that if certain proposed concessions were granted to foreigners by the government, the viceroys would refuse to carry them out. So loose is the connection between the capital and the several provinces, that while we were at war with Governor Yeh at Canton, British ships of war were protecting Amoy from pirates; and at the very time when our troops were scattering the imperial forces, and marching towards Peking, we were guarding Shanghae and its neighbourhood for the emperor against the Taipings. It is this state of matters which makes it necessary at times to settle affairs even by the use of force with the local officials.

It is a pity that Mr. Dilke has dragged from the silence of the tomb the memory of the late Sir Frederick Bruce; for it is the opinion (with very few, if any exceptions) of those who really understand the condition of China, and the character of its government, that the policy inaugurated by him (the records of which Mr. Dilke quotes as the essence of wisdom and the pattern for all future diplomacy) has been the bitter source of most of our troubles and dangers. How different would have been the course of events if Lord Elgin himself had been our first resident minister at Peking! The Chinese government has, of course, "repeatedly acknowledged the binding nature of treaties, and has declared itself willing to make amends in all cases where treaty stipulations have been violated." But they are thorough adepts in the arts of duplicity, deception, and evasion, and they have succeeded by a policy of passive resistance, masterly inactivity, and interminable delays, in rendering null and void some of the plainest stipulations of the treaty.

Sir Rutherford Alcock was at first fettered by the trammels of his predecessors' policy, but recent events seem to have given him the fitting opportunity for striking out a new policy, and of substituting vigorous and effective measures for the unworkable delays of the past.

The fear of a collision through such measures with America or some other foreign power is as chimerical as the suspicion that they may lead to a war with China. The real way of bringing about another Chinese war is to revert to the old system of permitting the Chinese to commit with impunity every sort of violence and injustice, and then, under the pressure of such difficulties, allowing our treaty rights to fall into abeyance, or even to be abrogated. No matter what motives we may have, no matter what motives we may state, the Chinese, both government and people (while, perhaps, politely praising our justice or forbearance), will INFALLIBLY ascribe such

conduct to weakness and fear, and will be encouraged to advance further in the same direction till some intolerable claim, or some tragedy of surpassing horror, becomes the occasion of a general war.

But it seems a cause of complaint that we may be liable to have "to avenge the quarrels of missionaries upon whose character, selection, operations, and discipline the British government had no check whatever." Would the writer prefer that the British government should set up a sort of missionary establishment in China, "selecting" the men, and superintending their "character, operations, and discipline?"—or can he tell us what "check" our government has on the "character, selection, operations, and discipline" of the mercantile community, of the customs' service, or of travellers for business, science, or pleasure? They have precisely the same check upon the one as upon the other. If doubtful whether a man be fit to be trusted in the interior, the consul can delay issuing his passport till he has made full inquiries; and if convinced that he is utterly unfit, he can refuse to give a passport, subject, of course, to an appeal to his superiors. And if the holder of a passport should act in a decidedly improper way, the consul can deprive him of the passport, or punish him by fine or imprisonment. It *may be* that undesirable results may sometimes follow from the actions "of unknown men" among missionaries, but much more probably from those of men, equally unknown, belonging to other sections of the foreign community. But far more serious evils are *certain* to follow when men, known or unknown, who are sadly ignorant both of the circumstances of China, of the nature of missions, and of the teachings of the Bible, venture under the shield of anonymous journalism to make heavy charges, and heavier insinuations, against the whole body of Chinese missionaries, and to deliver *ex cathedrâ* decisions on the right mode of evangelizing this empire and the world. I do not refer merely to the influence, greater or less, which such articles may have at home; but copied into the local papers in China, and very probably translated into Chinese, they may encourage misguided men to commit fresh outrages, and render necessary more severe measures than before.—I remain, your obedient servant,

(Signed) CARSTAIRS DOUGLAS, M.A.,
A Missionary of the English Presbyterian Church in China.

AMOY, 23*d February*, 1869.

V.

ADDITIONAL REMINISCENCES.

Additional communications from Mr. Douglas and Mr. Swanson reached my hand just as the first edition of this work had left the press. They seem to me, however, so valuable that I gladly avail myself of the opportunity of a fresh impression to insert here as much of them as is compatible with the limits of a brief appendix. Mr. Douglas devotes the chief part of his letter to the correction of certain "mistakes and mis-statements, some made by opponents, some by over-zealous or ill-informed friends." In case I may myself in the foregoing pages have used expressions, or quoted words used by others, fitted in any measure to encourage such errors, I am very glad to be able in this way to provide the corrective. Mr. Douglas first notices the very prevalent impression,

"(1) *That he was gloomy.* He was indeed often reserved towards strangers; and his faithful rebukes of sin might tend to create an impression that his mind was gloomy. But in fact he was genial and hearty. Especially among his friends this warm and happy character of his mind was very conspicuous. Though he usually liked to live alone (especially in a room connected with some chapel or hospital), so as to be fully master of his own time, yet he was fond of having some missionary as a companion in going about the country: and he delighted to spend his evenings with missionaries and their families, or with any like-minded friend. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous, and was fond of a hearty laugh, which was often the effect of his conversation when he unbent his mind among his intimate friends. Jokes upon *words* he did not relish: the form of the ludicrous which was most congenial to him was what may be in general styled the humorous, as, for instance, anecdotes about remarkable adventures or strange mistakes, examples of unexpected skill in escaping from a dilemma or a difficulty, and singular traits of national peculiarities or personal character. I recollect one occasion, when . . . on board the *Challenger*, while reading aloud the speech of Tertullus before Felix, he burst into a fit of laughter, and having recovered his composure explained that it appeared irresistibly ludicrous as being so like what a Chinaman would say in similar circumstances. He had a wonderful fund of varied anecdotes, both of

the graver and the lighter sort, connected with his wide-spread evangelistic labours in so many lands, which gave a great charm to his society. In him also was well exemplified that text, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' He was extremely fond of sacred music, and delighted in singing psalms and hymns, both alone and with others, both in English and Chinese. His acquaintance with music was a great help to him in his mission work, as well as a means of keeping up his cheerful, joyous spirit.

"(2) *That he was careless of his comfort: e.g.*, such absurd stories as his being ready to leave England for China with a carpet-bag; that he went about in China without a change of dress, 'ready with only scrip and staff,' as I see in a recent Dublin tract. The fact is that he was exceedingly careful of his health, and for that reason, of his comfort, both in regard to clothing and food and general care of himself. Of clothing he had always an abundant supply suited to the different states of weather. . . . When I began to go with him into the country, I was struck with the large quantity both of bedding and body-clothes which he carried with him (more than I have seen other missionaries use), for we must carry our bedding as well as our changes of dress. His explanation to me was that he always made himself comfortable wherever he went, just as if he were at home. He was also very particular about having his dress thoroughly clean and well arranged. In summer he was so careful in airing his clothes that it was a frequent proviso in appointing a meeting to consult on any matter, 'if it be not a north wind,' as that is the best wind for airing clothes. . . .

"As to *food* (both its material and its preparation) he was very particular. While in Amoy and its neighbourhood he used to eat heartily, especially of pork. I suspect that his spare diet at Nieu-chwang must have been the result of a general feeling of weakness and want of appetite. I recollect hearing that before his last illness he was observed to complain of being exhausted even by the walk (about a mile) from his lodging to the foreign settlement there. But whatever was the cause of the spare diet at Nieu-chwang, the quantity of his food while at Amoy was much about the same as that of his brethren.

"When at all out of sorts he was very careful of himself, and he used to recommend similar care to others. He used often to blame me for not taking what he considered sufficient rest in the hot weather.

"(3) *That he was generally engaged in pioneering work*, a mistake

into which even Mr. Johnston has fallen.[1] The fact is that he was usually assisting other missionaries in work already begun. A phrase very frequently on his lips was, 'Do not let any one be sent out to co-operate with me: I co-operate with others.' I am not certain of the exact character of his work during the three years before he first came to Amoy. Certainly about half that time he was residing in Hong-Kong and in Canton, and during most of the remainder was co-operating, I think, with the German missionaries. The only periods of any length after that time that can be properly called 'pioneering' are his first stay at Swatow (somewhat over two years), and the few months of his residence at Nieu-chwang. But in the Swatow region he had been preceded by the German missionary Lechler; indeed one special reason of his going there was to carry on the work of Mr. Lechler, which had been for some time suspended, and soon after going there he found one of Lechler's converts, a man of very decided character. In his later visits to Swatow, as well as at Amoy, Fuh-chow, Shanghai, and Peking, almost his whole work was co-operating with the missionaries previously settled there, usually in stations already begun or a place where a spirit of inquiry had been already excited.

"(4) *That he was a Baptist.* This report has been industriously spread in some quarters, being founded on the facts that he never administered baptism, and that on some occasions he worked along with Baptists. I need hardly remind you that he firmly held the scriptural authority of infant baptism, and also of sprinkling, whether as applied to children or adults; and that his sole reason for never baptizing was the desire of so avoiding anything like a *pastoral*

[1] Mr. Johnston's view and that of Mr. Douglas I think admit of reconciliation. Mr. J., whom I have quoted with so much pleasure in the body of the work, meant, as I understood him, to distinguish my brother's work simply as *evangelistic*, and not *pastoral*, and on that account necessarily in large measure that of a pioneer—visiting and exploring fields of missionary labour rather than statedly cultivating them. This I think really was the distinctive idea and purpose of his life, though in prosecuting this object he made the existing missions and missionary churches in every case his starting-point, and thus spent much of his time and strength in co-operating with other missionaries. His labours on the mainland opposite Hong-Kong, his early excursions amongst the villages around Amoy, his journeys along the canals and rivers of the Shanghai plain, his tentative operations at Swatow, his last days at Nieu-chwang—were of the former sort; his labours at Hong-Kong, at Amoy, at Fuh-chow, at Peking—were of the latter. I am glad, however, that Mr. Douglas has called special attention to an aspect of his missionary life which had been too much overlooked.

I. B.

relationship. Again, his occasional co-operation with Baptists merely arose from the catholic spirit in which he could co-operate with Christians of *any* evangelical denomination, along with the circumstance that on one or two occasions the persons who happened to be most thrown in his way were Baptists. By the same style of reasoning it would be easy to prove him an Independent, a Methodist, a Lutheran, or even an Episcopalian, or all of them at once.

"(5) *That he approved of the mode of action of the Plymouth Brethren or of the 'China Inland Mission.'* I need hardly say—as it is so abundantly manifest—that he had no sympathy with the *doctrines and church order* (or rather the want of definite doctrine and utter absence of church order) which characterize the Plymouth Brethren. . . .

"In regard to his own mode of action, he did not set himself up as a pattern to be copied in these respects. On the contrary, he was accustomed to defend his mode of action, not as a rule to be followed by others, but as a course suited to the special character of his own mind.

"He used to speak of himself as one of those supernumeraries or light-armed soldiers of whom a *small proportion* may be attached to the regular troops. . . .

"As regards the so-called 'Inland Mission,' his previous acquaintance with Mr. Taylor, and his catholic manner of 'hoping all things,' led him indeed in a private letter (published apparently without any authority) to express his hope that good might come of that movement; but in that very letter he stated very distinctly his disbelief of the practicability (under existing circumstances) of establishing missionaries permanently at such vast distances in the interior as 'all the provinces where there is yet no missionary.'

"He has often given expression to his decided opinion that the standard of the qualifications of missionaries ought not to be lowered, as what the Chinese field specially needs is not merely men who can preach a little simple truth, but men fully furnished with the *gifts and learning*, as well as the piety and zeal, necessary for wisely watching over the infant churches and native assistants, and for the great work of teaching and training the future ministry of China. Over and over he decidedly refused offers of that very kind of under-educated labourers which the 'Inland Mission' so largely employs.

It is a common mistake in determining the views of any historical person to use passages from all parts of his writings, and incidents from all periods of his life, as of equal value, regardless of the law of

change and progression which acts on all human minds. To the influence of this law Mr. Burns was no exception. It may be well to indicate a few examples.

"(1) *As to Residence at the Ports.*

"In his earlier letters there is often found a tendency to depreciate work at the treaty ports, and a desire that missionaries should mainly reside or travel about in the interior. But afterwards, as he found the difficulties of obtaining healthy residences in the interior, and as the climate began to tell on his own constitution, originally so very strong, and as the importance appeared of having strong churches at these centres of ever-increasing influence, his views were gradually modified; and while he still urged a greater amount of country work than had been usual in other missions, he was more alive to the need of having comfortable healthy residences at the treaty ports, as points from which to act on the interior. Of this no stronger proof could be desired than the fact that when he left Peking it was not to go to any of the great cities in the *interior*, but to settle at the port of Nieu-chwang, a place of comparatively small population, which derives its chief importance from being the *treaty port* of Manchuria.

"(2) *As to Colloquial Hymns.*

"During the year (1858-9) that we were together at Amoy, he strenuously opposed the attempt to make more *colloquial* hymns than the thirteen then in use (made by the Rev. W. Young, now in Australia), and urged in opposition the claims of hymns in the *literary style*, especially of the 'Sin-si hap-swan,' a collection in the literary style which he had made some years before. But very rapidly he not only changed these views, but set himself vigorously to make hymns in the colloquials of Swatow, Fuh-chow, Peking, and of Amoy itself. The hymns in the literary style are no longer used at public worship in the chapels here; and in the collection of sixty colloquial hymns used by the Presbyterian Church here (under the care of the American mission and our own) there are five hymns almost exactly as they came from his hand, and five others which are about half by him, and there is about the same proportion in the hymn-book of the L. M. S. At Swatow, Fuh-chow, and Peking also many of his colloquial hymns continue to be used in the several missions.

"(3) *In regard to the Chinese Dress.*

"Though he adopted it in 1855, and continued to use it till his death, he had for many years regarded it with indifference. Even before I went home (1862) he often told me that he had not found the benefit from it which he had expected, that he did not find it the means of making him more useful, and that he would not advise any one to adopt it. He considered it much *less safe* than the foreign dress: for instance, once when sailing with me to Anhai in the Gospel Boat, a pirate junk came in sight; I was below at the time, but Mr. Burns called me on deck, that the pirates seeing my foreign dress might be deterred from attacking us. He also often showed a feeling of distress when the Chinese called out, as they did constantly, 'Look at that foreigner *pretending* to be a Chinaman!' And in the years that elapsed since I last saw his face, this feeling of indifference deepened into something like dislike: for I have gathered from quite a number of witnesses in Amoy, Peking, and Nieu-chwang, that he often said that if he had known as much when he adopted the dress as he had learned by painful experience, he *would not have adopted it;* indeed, that he would have changed again to the foreign dress had it not been that he had got accustomed to it, and wished to avoid the expense and trouble of the change from one style of dress to another so different."[1]

In a subsequent letter Mr. Douglas sends me the following deeply touching document, the last lines ever traced by the dying missionary's hand, and bearing date about a month after his parting message to his mother.

"It is very touching," writes Mr. Douglas, "to copy out again these minute details about his friends, especially his Chinese friends, and that wonderful composing of his own epitaph when face to face with death: so calm and collected and peaceful; and those last strokes which he ever traced with the pen, his own old well-known hand, yet strangely altered, irregular and trembling from extreme weakness—'Wm. C. Burns,' on that 25th February when all his intercourse with *old* friends, even by pen and paper, came to an end:"—

[1] I have given at length, in the body of this work, the reasons which he himself gave for adopting the Chinese dress, and which, as he then thought, rendered it very useful in certain circumstances. I can, however, easily believe that subsequent experience, and especially the circumstances connected with his arrest in the neighbourhood of Canton, might tend considerably to modify this judgment.

I. B.

"For Rev. Carstairs Douglas, Amoy.

"I got a severe chill at the end of the year, which has resulted in a low fever, preventing me from getting refreshing sleep, and so bringing down my strength. In case I should be taken away, I take my pen to say that Dr. Watson will send down my boxes to your address when he meets with a suitable vessel. The key of the overland trunks I shall inclose in this (there is a spare one), and in one of them the keys of the other boxes will be found. The Chinese clothes can be given to old acquaintances, among whom do not forget Tan-tai.[1] The Dr.'s watch can be restored to him; my own watch can go home with the overland trunks when there is an opportunity. There is some new flannel and a few pairs of new socks which are at your disposal. Of four coloured silk handkerchiefs please give two to my friend Mr. A. Stronach. I would wish all my packets of letters (which Mr. Swanson took out of my chest of drawers, and put along with books, &c., in a box—you must remember it) to be put in one of the overlands, and sent home along with such as are at present in the boxes. I suppose it will be best to prepare a grave-stone at Amoy, and send it up well packed. For the inscription I would suggest, 'To the memory of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns, A.M., missionary to the Chinese from the Presbyterian Church in England. Born at Dun, Scotland, April 1st, 1815. Arrived in China, November, 1847. Died at Nieu-chwang . . . 1868, aged 53. 2 Corinthians v. chapter.'

"I have more than 300 taels at the British consulate, and when all local expenses are paid, Dr. Watson will remit what remains to your address to pay for the grave-stone, my subscription for Pechuia, &c. As to my present state of feeling, I may refer to the words of Paul, Phil. i. 23, &c. &c.

"Port of Nieu-chwang, Jan. 22d, 1868."

[Thus far in his own hand: what follows is written by dictation.]

"P.S. Of my Chinese articles the following I should like sent home to my relatives in my overland trunks:—1st, A new port-wine coloured camlet 'ma-kwa.'[2] 2d, A long gown of blue merino (or some such fabric), clean, though not new. 3d, A woven silk or floss sash. 4th, A Chinese leather-covered pillow.[3] 5th, A new Chinese pouch (for tying round the abdomen). 6th, A pair of ivory chop-sticks. A feather fan.

[1] One of the deacons of the L. M. S. at Amoy.
[2] Sort of jacket worn *over* the long gown.
[3] Stiff and round.

"7th, The long fur gown may perhaps suit yourself as a winter house-gown. The fur ma-kwa may be given to the native pastor of the Hok-tai church.[1] To Tau-lo, the pastor of the Sin-koe-a native church,[2] may be given a blue gown of heavy and excellent silk, along with a pair of Chinese leggings of flowered blue silk, and *not* wadded. The cloth ma-kwa with silk lining may be given to Tan-tai.[3] Four or five good gowns I would wish sent down to Swatow to be distributed to A-kee and Kilin of our mission, and A-sun and I-u of the American mission. For *A-kee*[4] may be selected a blue silk gown of inferior quality to that given to Tau-lo, also a full length camlet ma-kwa which I have worn a good deal. Then you must still find gowns for such men as I-ju,[5] Liong-lo,[6] Bu-liet.[7] Other articles you can distribute north and south[8] among the most worthy assistants and members, not forgetting my old friend Nui[9] at Pechuia. In making your distribution please consult with your brethren Messrs. Cowie and Macgregor.[10]

"I already have asked you to give two silk coloured handkerchiefs to Mr. A. Stronach. Of the three remaining white ones please take for yourself, and ask Mr. Cowie and Mr. Macgregor each to accept a coloured one.

"Mr. Sandeman's Geneva watch which I left in Mr. Swanson's hands, I should wish returned to his mother (Mrs. Sandeman) or sister.

"The knife, fork, and most, if not all, of the spoons in the leather case which you gave me belong, I believe, to Mr. Swanson, and should be returned to him.

"The chest of drawers and cane-bottomed couch I leave for the use of the mission: the members can arrange at any time who has the most need of them. There are three volumes of Morrison's Dictionary, the gift to me of the Rev. Mr. Keedy of London, which have been lent to Mr. Johnson of the Amer. Bapt. Mission, Swatow, for a number of years. He should be requested to give a receipt for

[1] Also called Tek-chhiu-kha, or the second church of Amoy.
[2] Or first church of Amoy. [3] Of L. M. S.
[4] Who was converted under Mr. Lechler before Mr. B. went to Swatow.
[5] One of the first Pechuia converts, now elder and helper at Chioh-bey.
[6] Assisting the Americans. [7] Of Pechuia.
[8] That is, from Chin-chow to Khi-boey.
[9] The cloth-dealer.
[10] Mr. Swanson had not then got back.

the same, and promise in case of his leaving China, or prospective decease, to return these to our mission at Swatow.—25th February, 1868.

[Signed with *his own* hand.] "WM. C. BURNS."

Mr. Swanson has written an important paper on the general history of the Amoy mission of which I cannot now avail myself, but which I hope will appear in another form. The following glimpse, however, of my brother's last visit to Amoy is so bright and life-like that I gladly insert it here:—

"In 1862 he came here from Fuh-chow. He arrived in the spring of that year, and remained in Amoy till August of the year following, when he left for Peking. Mr. Douglas left Amoy for a furlough home in June of 1862. It was during this last visit that I learned to know, love, and value Mr. Burns: and I can never think of that time without recalling our companying together, and without thanking God for permitting me to know him as I then did. Although he refused to take any part with me in the examination of inquirers, the administration of ordinances, and the general business of the mission, yet his labours and his advice were most valuable. He visited the stations regularly, and preached every Sabbath-day. I can recall how heartily and zealously he threw himself into the breach to help the persecuted brethren at Khi-boey; and I am certain that it was his wisdom and tact that were mainly instrumental in bringing matters to a happy conclusion in that region.

"At that time our American brethren and we jointly had a station at Chang-chow. The native church there had long been forced to meet in a small, confined house, quite unfit for a chapel in such an immense city as Chang-chow. They succeeded in getting a large and commodious house suited for a chapel. We expected some disturbance at its opening, and our expectations were not unfounded. There was some trouble. Mr. Burns went up soon after the opening, stayed in the chapel for two weeks or so, and then Dr. Carnegie and I joined him there. The doctor soon became most popular, and patients came crowding in. Mr. Burns, myself, and the native evangelists had some excellent opportunities for preaching, and I remember yet how delighted he seemed to be to see us all as busy as we could be with this work.

"During this time Mr. Burns also made several visits to our *then* most northerly station, Anhai. We frequently went there as well as to the other stations together. On these journeys he has again

and again given me accounts of his life and labours in Scotland, England, and Canada. We often sat up till far on in the morning—I, a most eager listener to the deeply interesting details of his labours.

"While we were in Amoy together we saw each other twice daily. He lived in a room in the Amoy Medical Missionary Hospital, and there I went to see him daily at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, he coming to see me about 5 o'clock in the evening. He had always some very nicely boiled rice and a delicate little pork-chop for me, and used to force me to eat. Oftentimes I used to feel weary and oppressed with a number of things connected with such a scattered and extensive field of labour as that of our mission. I can yet recal his loving, kindly manner, how he used to pat me on the shoulder, lead me to the side of the room where stood a large bamboo couch, and kneel down and pray. These prayers I shall never forget. I was young and inexperienced then, and felt keenly the weight of responsibility that was on me, but he always had a kind word to encourage me. I can remember well one such day when I felt more than usually troubled on account of some mission matters, when he clapped me on the back and told me to keep my mind easy, for if I were pastor of a church at home, and had some troublesome elders or cantankerous deacons, it would be worse for me than even such trials as I had in Amoy.

"But I cannot omit one thing so bright, so profitable to us during that brief season. He spent most of his evenings in the houses of his brother missionaries, and in our house he was naturally more frequently than in any other. He was one of the most genial, cheerful men I ever met, but he took great care as to when, how, and where he unbent himself. The presence of any one with whom he had not full sympathy immediately made him quiet, and I have seen him sit long in such circumstances without uttering a single word.

"His short expositions at family worship were always remarkable and most deeply interesting. Mrs. Swanson and he were great friends, and seemed always to understand one another. I remember yet his great anxiety about her at one time when she was rather indisposed.

"He left me for Peking in August, 1863. I saw him on board ship, and very soon after our getting on board the ship left the inner harbour. Next day I saw she was still at anchor off Amoy. I went out to see him, and stayed two hours with him. We prayed together, and I turned to leave. He sent his love to my wife, and I

think I hear him yet saying, 'The Lord bless her and Willy' (my little boy) 'and yourself.' I saw him no more, and shall not see him again till, I trust, we meet above."

Long months ago, with anxious heart and sore,
We prayed for him, whom our dim fancy's sight
Saw, faintly labouring, 'mid the harvests white,
On Sinim's distant shore;
For selfishly we grudged that one who bore
So well the fiercest onset of the fight,
And used so well the arms of heavenly might,
Should give the conflict o'er.
But even while, with blind, weak love we pray'd
Thus for the toil-worn, bowed, and weary one,
The Master, more compassionate, had said—
"Rest now, thou soldier, rest! Servant, well done!
"Let others hold thy plough, and wield thy blade,
"And wrestle for the crown which thou hast won."[1]

July 8, 1868. W. B.

[1] Lines by an unknown hand, which appeared in the public prints immediately after the tidings of Mr. Burns' death reached Scotland.

THE END.

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